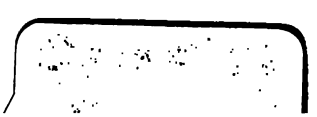
Autobiography of

THOMAS ALLEN

by the Author of

"POST MORTEM"



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

SUCH as my life has actually been, so I propose to record it. It is not for me, in this place, to point out particulars in which the thousands who have professed to do the same thing have failed. Nevertheless, I intend to profit rather by the warnings which their real shortcomings furnish, than by the examples which their apparent successes invite; and amongst the faults which this work must contain, I believe that wilful exaggeration and timid suppression will not be found. The general taste in the matter of literature has of late become

accustomed to some very strange models; and it is certainly curious that those who, in the real business of life, persistently discard all false romance, not only tolerate, but eagerly seek it, in the field of fancy. It now remains to be proved whether the maxim still holds good, "that the true private history of the humblest individual is attractive, as well as instructive, to the highest;" or whether efforts to show what we ought to be—or rather what we ought not to be—are now preferred to descriptions of what we are.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

THOMAS ALLEN.

CHAPTER I.

My birth took place one wet evening in June 1843, at Hare Place, the seat of my father, in one of the home counties. Although on first coming into the world I was in very kind hands, it might have seemed otherwise; for I was flogged with the corner of a wet towel, and ducked in brandy, almost directly I had made my appearance. My parents, Mr and Mrs Allen, decided

upon "Thomas" for my first Christian name, and afterwards, from some family considerations, they added the names "Cecil," and "Longstaffe:" and thus, having been born and christened, I became Thomas Cecil Longstaffe Allen. I shall endeavour not to dwell over the scenes and incidents of my childhood for an undue length of time; but being blessed — or afflicted—with a very remarkable gift of memory, I trust some indulgence may be accorded to me in that respect.

Some writers of autobiographies, when dealing with the period of their childhood, are content to inform their readers merely "that they have a vague recollection of a great clock, whose tick used to inspire them with wonder;" or "that they just remember, as if in a dream, a certain old picture, which used to fill them with

terror ;" or, perhaps, " that the memory of a far-off past summons back to life a pale, delicate lady," who was their mother.

Other writers, again, undeterred by the fear of being thought either prolix or impertinent, or both, occupy a great space in attempting to show that the after characteristics of the man or woman were all foreshadowed in the boy. The child of seven clenches his tiny fist when the beetle-browed lawyer is talking villany to the child's mamma ; and the cheeks of a little maid of thirteen are suffused with blushes when the name of her male cousin is mentioned. For myself, I shall endeavour to avoid saying either too little or too much ; and so, having mentioned my birth and parentage in the briefest manner possible, I will ask the reader's patience while I turn, rather more closely, to a period commencing just

ten years later; or, in other words, when I was just ten years old.

Having passed through various vicissitudes and perils which I have refrained from recording, I was now installed at a boarding-school, kept by a certain Dr Barkum, in an out-of-the-way corner of my native county. This school had formerly been managed by a person of the strange name of Wildbull; and Barkum had been one of his ushers. Wildbull having grown old, and having perceived an attachment between his daughter (who was just thirty) and his favourite assistant, had handed over to the latter all which that individual could have possibly desired—namely, his daughter, his scholars, and all that belonged to his school. Dr Wildbull, furthermore, wishing that his son-in-law should in all respects maintain the dignity hitherto asso-

ciated with the head-mastership of Cumberland House, had caused him to be ordained, and had then purchased for him the degree of Doctor at the University of Oxford. Having taken these kind and liberal measures, Dr Wildbull had retired to a neighbouring farm, meaning to enjoy for the future a life of lettered ease, mingled with the interesting pursuit of agriculture. But the complete alteration in his mode of existence—above all, it was said, the want of exercise for his lungs and for his arms, from which he suffered — had speedily hurried him into his grave. His son-in-law, Barkum, then made the dreadful discovery that Dr Wildbull had died heavily in debt, and had lived chiefly upon an annuity. The result was that a terrible change came over Dr Barkum, a change from which his wife and his scholars, in-

cluding myself, principally suffered. His temper, never of the best, became savage to a morbid and alarming degree; and he seemed to abandon himself to violence, for the practice of which, his position gave him such constant and favourable opportunities.

In person, Dr Barkum was short of stature, and wore large sandy whiskers, which were just turning grey. He had a high yet narrow forehead, a receding chin, curious little grey eyes (in which cunning and incompetence appeared to struggle for the mastery), and large full lips of an unwholesome pallor. His voice was harsh and monotonous, and his mode of utterance was rendered especially singular by his being unable to pronounce a "Th," or the letter "R." As for Dr Barkum's dress, during school hours he generally wore a tailless coat of black broadcloth, which de-

scended to the backs of his knees, and which was furnished with two flapped side-pockets, into which he often thrust his hands. His waistcoat was of the clerical pattern, and made of ribbed silk ; and his trousers were made of black serge, and cut so loose at the extremities that his feet were almost concealed.

Of his assistants, the under-masters, there were four,—namely, Mr Jervis, who taught Latin and Greek, and who by his skill did much to keep up the good reputation of the school; Mr Marter, a pompous vulgar man of low attainments, who was supposed to instruct us in English history, geography, writing, arithmetic, and sacred subjects ; Mr Crabbe, who was well employed in making himself generally useful; and Monsieur Fourcroy, a tall fair-haired French master, whom we believed to be a nobleman.

Of these under-masters, I particularly detested Mr Marter, who, ever since I had accidentally discharged a spoonful of tea in his face as he was peacefully solving a magazine acrostic at our evening meal, had shown a malignant and persistent rancour towards me, from which I was constantly made to suffer. With the others I generally managed to hold my own; while as for the learned Principal, Dr Barkum, when he was not beside himself with rage, he treated me with kindness, and even with partiality, which conduct, without doing him injustice, I believe I may attribute to the fact that my father was at that time a man of considerable influence in the county.

Having concluded these introductory matters, I will proceed without further delay to the main recital of my adventures.

CHAPTER II.

It was the dinner-hour at Cumberland House, and without waiting for Mrs Barkum, who was late, our Principal ordered us to chant a Latin grace which he had himself written, and which the organist of the church we frequented had set to music—

> "Carnem, panem, et cerevisiam præstas,
> Gratias tibi ergo agimus, et gaudemus."

While we sang these striking words, Mr Marter, who acted as fugleman, fixed his eyes upon me in a sinister manner, and bellowed each word in a foreign accent, with such ludicrous effect that I had to bite

my lip in order to avoid laughing. This inaugural ceremony concluded, we sat down and commenced eating. We were presently joined by Mrs Barkum, whom her husband greeted thus—

"Well, Aggie; you're vewy late; ve meat's getting cold."

He had prepared for her a plateful of shoulder of mutton, which by this time had certainly become very unappetising. She appeared to be of that opinion; for, my place at dinner being next to hers, I saw her shudder as she began to ply her knife and fork. She soon gave still plainer evidences of her disgust, by heaping the greater portion of her food round the edge of the plate. I had just observed her execution of this well-known school manœuvre when I received a pretty smart kick on the shins, and looking up, I perceived that Dr Barkum

had sunk a few inches below the level he usually maintained on his chair. It was obvious that he had designed his kick for Mrs Barkum, and not for me; for, having eyed her intently, he said in a soft but menacing tone—

"Eat it up, my dear. Would you like ve pepper?"

She answered, "Yes, please." Upon which Barkum called to Enoch, the man-servant, and said—

"Enoch, give your mistwess ve pepper."

Poor Mrs Barkum then dismantled her rampart, disguised the materials with pepper, and ate as she was desired.

Soon afterwards Dr Barkum noticed that one of the boys, Drinkwater, had left a piece of meat unconsumed upon his plate.

"Finish your dinner, Dwinkwater," said he.

"Please, sir," answered the boy, "it's got a vein in it."

"Nonsense!" said the Doctor; "vat's all fancy. Enoch, give Master Dwinkwater ve pepper."

And so, whenever we neglected to finish what we were given, fat and all, from whatever cause, our difficulties were overcome in the same manner, Dr Barkum calling out, "Enoch, give vat boy ve pepper." The bolder ones, however, employed stratagem to evade this disagreeable regulation; and having brought into dinner small paper funnels, constructed for this particular service, furtively filled them with such parts of their dinner as they did not choose to swallow—the unsavoury parcel being afterwards carried to a certain old watch-dog,

who, perpetually chained to a tub in the backyard, was very grateful for this or any other kind of notice.

But having to eat arbitrary quantities of fatty or veined meat, was not the only hardship we used to undergo during our dinner-hour. When we had scraped up the last morsel of pudding from our plates, and when those who were improvident had finished their last drop of table-beer, Dr Barkum was in the habit of proclaiming silence by means of the handle of his knife, helping Mrs Barkum and himself to cake and port wine, and then conducting a *vivâ voce* examination, which on this particular occasion was nearly as follows:—

DR BARKUM. — Dwinkwater: "*Hoc age?*"

DRINKWATER. — "Come here;" "Do this," I mean.

DR BARKUM.—Which do you mean?

DRINKWATER.—"Do this."

DR BARKUM.—I should fink so.

Here he called to a boy of the name of Rance, and said, "Wance, what were ve seven places which claimed to be ve birf-place of Homer?"

RANCE.—I didn't quite hear your ques-ton, sir.

DR BARKUM.—If you don't hear it vis time, you shall go up to my dwessing-woom and have a taste of ve birch.

He then repeated his question, but the only answer Rance contrived to make was, "that he believed it wasn't cer-tain."

Upon this, Dr Barkum,—his mouth full of cake and wine—made a rapid descent upon Rance, caught him by the ears, and repeatedly bumped his head against the

empty plate in front of him. He then resumed his seat, observing—

"Now, I told vat boy, only vis morning, and gave him ve seven names in a hexameter, on purpose. Slater, can you answer vat question? No! Vewy well; and if I have to speak to you again about using vat waistcoat on week-days, I'll give you a good caning. Tyce, what were ve seven names?"

Herbert Tyce was my particular friend, yet, knowing that he was idle and thoughtless, I was surprised to hear him answer, "Smyrna, Rhodos, Colophon, Colophon—"

Dr Barkum.—Yes?

Tyce.—Salamis?

Dr Barkum.—Oh, so Artis is telling you, is he? Slater and Wance, Tyce and Artis, you all leave the woom. Find out ve wight answer, and each wite it out

twenty times. And don't dare to go out to ve playgwound till you've done so. Enoch——"

"Sir," answered Enoch.

"Bwing in ve cheese."

When we had each eaten a piece of cheese, we stood up and again sang—

"Carnem, panem, et cerevisiam," &c.,

and the painful ceremony of dining was at an end.

I ran out with the others, in order to play a game of football; but just as we had commenced to choose sides, we saw a well-appointed barouche draw up in front of Dr Barkum's door. I recognised the carriage and its occupants, and pulling on my jacket, which I had just thrown off, ran as fast as I could to the house. There I was met by a servant, who told me that a

gentleman had called to see me, and that I was to go in to the drawing-room. I found Dr Barkum, his face beaming with smiles, endeavouring to entertain my visitors, in which task he was being seconded by his wife.

When I had entered the room and had greeted the gentleman and his daughter, a little girl of about my own age, Dr Barkum said—

"Allen, Mr Sutcliffe has invited you to go back to Colling Hall till Monday. I don't know whever I ought to let you go."

At this we all smiled, including Dr Barkum, who then desired me to run to Mrs Olland, the matron, and have some clothes packed. My little portmanteau was soon afterwards hoisted under the legs of Mr Sutcliffe's footman, and after a drive of about twelve miles, through a beautiful

country, the existence of which, in such close proximity to my school, quite astonished me, I arrived at Colling Hall, in company with my kind host and his amiable little daughter Helena.

CHAPTER III.

Mr Sutcliffe was the head of an ancient family, and he owned considerable property. He had for some time been left a widower, and now bestowed most of his affection upon his only child Helena. He loved her better than himself, and than any one else in the world; but I think it quite necessary to add that there was nothing of the marvellous in Mr Sutcliffe's attachment for his daughter. To begin with, her face did not bear the slightest resemblance to that of her departed mother; and then, again, the squire had many things to occupy his time,—things of a more reasonable kind

than the self-imposed and unprofitable task of acting as a sort of dry-nurse to his little girl.

He spent much of his time in attending to his own estate, and to the business of the county. His duties as a justice of the peace were particularly agreeable to him; for his hobby lay in the investigation of crime: and in his magisterial capacity he often did work which properly belonged to the superintendent of police. As a young man, (he was now past middle life), he had attended some of the most celebrated executions of the day; and yet, so far from showing indifference to the fate of the culprits on such occasions, he used to be profoundly affected, sighing, and shaking his head at intervals for several days afterwards. For in spite of his morbid propensity he had an exceedingly tender heart.

Mr Sutcliffe was distantly connected by marriage with my father; and they were very closely connected by the bonds of friendship and mutual esteem. I had already more than once been taken to Colling Hall from Saturday to Monday; and the more I disliked the caprices of Dr Barkum, and the tyranny of his subordinate, Marter, the more did I enjoy these visits to a refined and hospitable home. Colling Hall was a picturesque Elizabethan structure; solid and majestic, by reason of the care with which it had been originally raised, and the age during which it had been built; and comfortable, by reason of the modern improvements to which the old house had been judiciously adapted, not ruthlessly subjected.

"Tom," said Mr Sutcliffe, as I was regaling myself with a second dinner or luncheon, and with no dread of a post-prandial

examination, followed, perhaps, by a beating—"Tom, how do you like Dr Barkum? Does he give you plenty to do?"

THOMAS.—Very much.

MR SUTCLIFFE. — What! you like him very much; or he gives you very much to do?

HELENA (laughing).—He means——

THOMAS.—I mean I like him rather.

MR S.—Only "rather," what? Well, I've heard he's a very good master; but I suppose you don't think so much about that. Does he let you have plenty of play, and all that kind of thing? That's right. Does he give you plenty to eat?

THOMAS. — Yes; we have rather good meals.

MR S.—Oh, come! that's satisfactory, at any rate. I suppose he pitches into some of you with the cane now and then. What?

THOMAS (embarrassed).—Sometimes; at least rather often.

MR S.—Oh dear! Well, and what is Mrs Barkum like?

THOMAS.—We don't see her much.

MR S.—I should think she led a dullish life. Helena, how should you like to marry a schoolmaster? What?

HELENA.—Very much, papa. I should run and cram all the boys with sweets all day, and help them to do their lessons.

THOMAS.—I wish——at least; no, I don't.

MR S.—What were you going to have said?

THOMAS.—I was going to say I wish she could go and marry Barkum, only I don't.

This ingenuous explanation of mine made both Helena and her father laugh heartily.

Mr Sutcliffe continued good-naturedly talking to me about my school life; and I am sure my conversation must have fatigued him at last. But, providentially, I happened to mention that we had a boy at our school of the name of Good, and, I was emboldened to add, that he was not a good boy at all. Directly Mr Sutcliffe heard me mention this schoolfellow's name, however, he became sincerely interested, and asked me several questions as to the boy's parentage, more especially "whether there was any mystery about his family?"

I was unable to satisfy Mr Sutcliffe with an affirmative answer, whereupon he heaved a sigh, and observed: "You are too young, I suppose, to have remembered Daniel Good. Yes, strange to say, I assisted in his capture: at least, not his capture, precisely speaking; for he captured us upon that occasion."

"Oh," said I; and Mr Sutcliffe proceeded: "it was an extraordinary piece of good luck. I happened to be interested in a robbery at the time; and a great friend of mine allowed me to accompany the police on a search expedition. Mr Good[1] was suspected of stealing, and we went to look for the property in his master's stable. Daniel was a coachman, you know. Well, we were hunting about in the stable, Daniel with us, when he suddenly ran out, locking us in. Just then one of the police, I forget his name, came upon——Helena, run out of the room for a moment."

"May I stop my ears, instead, papa? I haven't finished my pudding," said Helena.

[1] This fashion of speaking of criminals was in after years turned to very good account; for an enterprising newspaper earned the character of being spirited and humorous, solely through persistently speaking of murderers and robbers as "Mr So-and-so."

Her father consented, and went on: "He came upon the trunk of a female."

"What is a trunk, please?" I asked.

"A box, isn't it?" said Helena, who had now removed her hands from her ears.

"Well, never mind that;" said her father, "our discovery led to Daniel's apprehension; and, I am sorry to say, I afterwards went to see him hanged."

"What's it like, seeing a man hung?" I inquired.

"A very sad, degrading spectacle," answered Mr Sutcliffe.

After dinner, or luncheon, Helena invited me to come for a ride with her. I was accordingly mounted on a favourite old pony of Mr Sutcliffe's. Helena rode her mare, "Jenny Lind," and, attended by an elderly servant, we made a long excursion

into the country. I never enjoyed any expedition more. Helena could talk better, and in a manner more congenial to boys, than would have been expected from such a little girl. I confided to her all about my home life, as well as my school; and I made her laugh once or twice to such an extent, that Jenny Lind broke into a gallop.

When we returned, our young faces glowing with health and excitement, Mr Sutcliffe asked how Courvoisier had carried me. For that, I found, was the name his old pony bore.

On Sunday, after going to church, we passed away some of the day in visiting Helena's pets, which were numerous, for she had an extrordinary fondness for animals. "Billy," the peacock, seemed to be a great favourite, though he bore a very bad moral

character, having slain no less than three mates with which he had been provided!

I was, as may be supposed, very sorry to leave Colling Hall; and when I returned to school, early on Monday morning, I really felt more home-sick than when I had first left my father and mother. I began to feel for Dr Barkum a greater contempt than ever. As I looked at his insignificant form, large sandy whiskers, pale fat lips, long tailless coat, and his trousers nearly concealing his feet; and as I heard, and occasionally received, the heavy blows of his cane, I feared and detested him as if he were a demon. He did not show me any special malevolence, it was true; but he treated us all as so many apes of various culture, who had somehow been committed to his charge: and he never seemed to consider that we had little characters and pre-

judices of our own. Mr Marter, on the other hand, gave himself some trouble in gratifying those who pleased him, and a great deal of trouble in persecuting those whom he disliked. However, he was consistent, I must own, and I always knew that he and I were at war; whereas I have known Dr Barkum to joke with a boy, and slap him in the face at almost the same moment. This visit of mine to Colling Hall made me discontented and unhappy; and I began to wonder why I could not be educated at home, in the same manner as Helena Sutcliffe. I could not at this time understand the necessity of studying brutality and meanness at the same time as Latin and Greek.

CHAPTER IV.

On returning to Dr Barkum on Monday morning, I speedily realised, to the full extent, the force of those comparisons I had lately been making in my mind between the comforts of Colling Hall and those of Cumberland House. I was just in time for the first daily lesson — which consisted of dictation — under Messrs Marter and Crabbe. The two masters each read aloud to a separate group of boys. What they read from we never knew; but I believe Mr Crabbe preferred ancient history, while Mr Marter was fond of reading selections from certain of the English classics. I

always found it difficult to avoid disgrace in this writing from dictation; for, besides that Marter used to pronounce certain English words as no other human being pronounced them, my seat happened to be exactly between the two batches of boys, so that I was obliged to hear Mr Crabbe's dictation—which was not addressed to me—as well as Mr Marter's dictation, which was.

Mr Crabbe.—In vain did the Veientines resist, colon; the Veientines; resist, colon——

Mr Marter.—To 'oom should Eliza; to 'oom should Eliza apply in 'er distress; apply——

Mr Crabbe.—Those Romans who were in the city, comma. Those Romans——

Mr Marter.—Yorick would be offended, comma. Yorick would be offended, comma——

MR CRABBE.—Let your mouth alone, Slater, and sit properly.

MR MARTER.—Yorick would be offended, comma; and with reason, comma; and with——

BOY.—A comma after reason, sir?

MR CRABBE.—The statue of Juno was carried; the statue of Juno was carried; to Rome——

BOY.—Mr Marter; please sir, I've made a blot.

MR MARTER.—You did it on purpose.

MR CRABBE.—Camillus, comma; having painted his face; with vermilion, comma. With vermilion, comma——

BOY.—Please, sir, may I have a fresh nib?

MR CRABBE.—Certainly not.

While I was collecting some of the above fragments, Mr Marter came and bent over

me with apparent kindness. Having read a portion of what I had written, however, he suddenly began to wring his right hand in a very strange manner. A ruler then came forth from his sleeve, and with it he began to batter my knuckles. This kind of assault was against all regulations; for Dr Barkum was jealous of his favourite prerogative. All this I knew, and I rose from my seat, heedless of Marter's commands that I should remain where I was, and marching up to Dr Barkum, complained of the ill-usage I had received.

Mr Marter, very red in the face, called out, "It was a bit of fun, sir."

Upon which Barkum said, "I fink you'd better not have any fun in school-time, please;" and Marter, trying his best to appear merry, though he looked as unhappy and contemptible as any one in the

world, declared that he would be more careful.

This incident made the feud between him and myself more bitter than ever. He made many attempts to humiliate me, and overcome my spirit. At his geography class, which I had to attend, when it came to my turn to answer a question, Mr Marter would ask me a sort of conundrum which he had mischievously composed for my mortification.

"Allen," thundered he, having just inquired where Ceylon was situated, "Why do the Indians pity us?"

"I didn't know that they did, sir," I replied; whereupon a little boy whom Marter had primed beforehand, answered, "Because we can't grow rice."

"Yes," said the learned Marter; "go up above Allen."

He presently came to me again, and demanded: "Why can a canal never be made across the Isthmus of Sooez?"

"I suppose," answered I, "because the sand would always fall in when they dug."

This, strange to say, was the very answer that Marter had devised; but instead of being satisfied, he roared out, "'Oo told you that?"

"Nobody," answered I.

"Aren't you the boy that threw tea in my face?" shouted Marter, adding, "Then 'ow do you suppose that I'm going to believe your word?"

I hung my head at this conclusive reasoning, and he triumphed. But he was not content with such victories as these.

I have said that I was popular among the boys. Yet, owing to the wicked machinations of Marter, I was soon brought into

most unmerited disgrace with every one. A boy named Fisher one day announced that a gold penholder had been abstracted from his desk. The affair made that sort of disagreeable stir which such affairs always do make in a school or similar community. After three or four days, however, I perceived, and with a sinking heart, which scorn and indignation were unable to sustain, that the under-masters and the matron were disposed to suspect me of being the thief. The cold and malevolent glances which they cast upon me were presently reflected in the countenances of the other boys, my schoolfellows. At last I found one of them, Slater, in the act of writing something in the fly-leaf of my Latin dictionary. I perceived that he had written after my name (Allen), the words, "bagged Fisher's penholder."

I asked him what he meant by this, to which he answered, "And you know you did bag it." I then struck him with my fist, when, without returning the blow, he challenged me to fight him, and I agreed to do so. My friend Tyce consented, though not with much alacrity, to act as my second; and both principals, with their backers and a crowd of little boys, hurried off to a certain passage which we were supposed to use for the purpose of changing our boots or slippers. As the battle differed in one most material point at least, from any similar battle of which the reader has ever read, I may be excused if I describe it in some detail. Slater was taller and broader than I was, and possessed of longer arms. His "puffy countenance," however, showed that he was not in good fighting condition; in fact, he was addicted to eating sweet

things at all times of the day, which practice had disordered his stomach and his complexion. For my part, I was strong, active, and in good training; I was courageous and obstinate, and was engaged in a good cause. As soon as we had taken up the proper position, Slater advanced, and began his attack by aiming several blows at my face. These blows I successfully parried with my right arm and left fist, in a way which I had learnt from a favourite uncle, Colonel Thomas Allen. I soon had the satisfaction of seeing that my tactics were having a good effect, for my opponent's blows grew wilder. At length, believing that the right moment had arrived, I assumed the offensive, which I no sooner did than Slater closed with me, and threw me to the ground. "Time" was then called.

At the commencement of the next round, Slater stood opposite to me, with his arms hanging idly by his side, as if he meant to invite me to attack him. I immediately rushed upon him, and gave him a very fair blow in his right eye. He did not allow me to do him any further harm, however, for he gave me two violent blows on the lip, and a few more on the body; and as I was furthermore so unlucky as to stumble over some boots which lay on the floor, I might have fared even worse, had not "Time" at that moment been called. I now heard Slater say to one of his backers, "first blood;" and I found that one of my teeth was loose, and my mouth bleeding. When I stood up for the next round, I had determined to make the most of my superior training; and certainly, could I have led my opponent round a circle of

about a quarter of a mile, my plan would have succeeded. I moved about the dark and narrow passage as rapidly as I could, at the same time sparring in the air in a manner which excited some amusement. Slater followed with a determined air, and just as I was thinking of falling upon him, he fell on me, gave me another blow on the wounded lip, seized me by the neck, and then placing his right foot outside my right ankle, hurled me to the ground. I sprang up to attack him again, but the bystanders interfered. They declared "that it was a *chouse* going on," and that hostilities must cease. Thus ended the battle.

In my defeat I could not see any appearance of what is called "a moral victory." I had, in fact, or to a certain extent, appealed to the "trial by combat," and I had been worsted. My schoolfellows, at

least, seemed to be of that opinion; for the next day, which was Sunday, when we were each desired to choose a companion for our walk, in which we were marshalled two and two, Herbert Tyce made an excuse for not walking with me, and I was paired with a new boy, who, by reason of his dark complexion, we had christened Sambo. The same day Mr Marter, who rejoiced over my humiliation, and who seemed especially delighted by the sight of my large swollen lip, the result of my late encounter, having summoned us to receive some scriptural instruction from him, resumed the task of reducing me to despair. Having caused a boy, named Saddler, to read that "Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife," Mr Marter questioned us as follows:

"What is meant, next, by Isaac 'sporting' with his wife? Well?"

FIRST BOY.—Playing with her, sir?

MARTER. — Playing with 'er. Next; what do you say?

SECOND BOY.—Sporting with her.

MARTER.—Stand up on the form, and just mind what you're after. Next; next; Buller.

BULLER.—Tickling her, sir?

MARTER.—Tickling 'er; yes, teasing 'er, or larking with 'er; that's what it means." Here he turned upon me, and asked in a rapid threatening tone, "What does it mean, that boy with the ugly lip?"

"I didn't quite hear the question, sir," I answered.

"Are you deaf, or a dunce?" said Marter; "both, I think. Saddler, read the 'ole verse over again for Allen, the deaf boy

with the ugly lip, who's allowed to throw tea in my face."

The passage was again read; Marter asked, "What is meant by Isaac 'sporting' with his wife?"

I sullenly answered, "Larking with her," and Marter said—

"Yes; and you'd better not 'ave any larks with me."

In the dormitory that night, when I got out of bed to join in a kind of football-match which was going on, my appearance had the same effect as that of Dr Barkum would have had, for all the other boys went back to their beds. Herbert Tyce, however, came to me presently, and after slightly discussing the chief topic of the day, observed—

"You see, we've always been very good friends, and all that, and I know Marter's

a beastly cad; but he says that young Fisher lost the penholder out of his desk between dinner and half-past three, and that you were the only chap who was in the schoolroom then; that's what's setting the fellows against you."

"Well, Tyce," said I, in reply, "if the thing is ever found out, will you remember to say that I said it was a lie accusing me? They'll be sorry for it, to-morrow."

After a short pause, Tyce said, in a low tone, "You're not going to run away, are you?"

"Yes, I am," answered I.

"Oh, don't!" said Tyce, though I could plainly see that he hoped to enjoy the excitement the proposed escapade would cause. "Don't," he repeated; "I hope it'll come all right in the end."

"Thank you," said I; "good-night."

"Good-night," said Tyce; "will you shake hands?"

The next morning, after a night of troubled slumber, I rose at about five o'clock, dressed myself, and, after experiencing some difficulty in unfastening a door, left the house, and ran like a hare until my breath was nearly expended. I then sat upon a stile, and deliberated as to the direction in which I should proceed. At first I had naturally intended to find my way home: but now, perceiving that I was near the road which I knew led to Colling Hall, I determined to go there. "Mr Sutcliffe," thought I, "is a very good-natured man, and has been a boy himself. Helena will think it was plucky of me. I will go and place myself under their protection."

Keeping as much as possible to the fields,

but always having the road as my guide, I traversed about five miles of country, and then entered a small village, where I purchased a piece of ginger-bread and a bottle of ginger-beer. Then I proceeded to a neighbouring thicket, where I breakfasted, having paid an extra penny for the absolute possession of the ginger-beer bottle. Refreshed by my meal, and further stimulated by imagining Barkum in hot pursuit, I again set forth, and after another hour's walking, came to Colling Hall.

After some hesitation I rang the bell, and was shown into the breakfast-room, where I found Mr Sutcliffe reading his letters, and awaiting the arrival of his daughter, who had not yet come downstairs. I told Mr Sutcliffe the state of affairs in a few words, he listening with a most puzzled expression of countenance,

and as soon as I had finished, exclaimed, "Ah! . . . Ha, há! . . . Yes; well, you'd better have something to eat in the first place."

I at once ate, with an excellent appetite, some hash and buttered toast, and having suddenly looked up at Mr Sutcliffe, could have declared that he was laughing; but his face immediately returned to the expression of perplexity.

Presently Helena appeared. "I've run away," I told her, with a mixture of mournful pride and embarrassment. She looked in astonishment from me to her father, who said: "Yes, he has; but get your own breakfast, dear, I must take a little time to think over this. I don't know," he mused soon afterwards, "but what it would be the best thing, on the whole, to pack you off to school again. What! You see," he

continued, "by harbouring you in my house, I may render myself liable to the same forfeiture and punishment as yourself."

"Not really!" I exclaimed.

"Well, well," said he, "I must think about it. In the meantime I should recommend you not to stray far from the house, or Dr Barkum may pounce down upon you." With that he left me. Helena, now that we were alone, asked in a most melancholy tone, "Are you dreadfully tired?"

"Not very," answered I.

"Why did you run away?"

"Because I was so unhappy," I replied; and after a brief struggle, I burst out crying.

For a few moments Helena silently watched me, and she then quietly left the room. Soon afterwards, however, I

saw her on the lawn outside, peeping at me through the window, and she was then herself in tears.

In the course of that morning, Mr Sutcliffe desired my attendance in his justice-room. There he made me twice repeat my story to him, after which he told me to fear nothing, for that he would do his best for me. He informed me, also, that he expected my father and mother to arrive at Colling Hall shortly,—he having sent them a message acquainting them with what had happened to their only son.

CHAPTER V.

UNTIL my parents arrived at Colling Hall, I passed an existence something like that of a prisoner on parole. Helena had been carried off to a children's party at some distance from her home, and I was left to my own resources. I spent most of the time in wandering about the house, observing whatever was to be seen. In the course of my explorations I came to Mr Sutcliffe's study, and finding the door open, went in. The room was gloomy and dark. Upon one table lay a couple of ledgers, a few bills and other documents, and writing materials; but in all other respects the room

was not a study, but a museum of interesting relics. A brace of flint pistols, two pieces of rope, a razor, a crowbar, a rusty dagger, and two or three glass cases. One of these cases contained a coat, trousers, and neckerchief, and bore a label on which was written, "Greenacre; May 2d, 1837." The name suggested to my mind some pleasant rural spot; and not understanding the connection between the name and the articles of clothing, I passed on to another object of interest—namely, the dagger, to which was attached the following doubtful, yet sufficiently plain, inscription, written in faded ink on a piece of parchment: "George Hallowes, possibly only a smuggler, but perhaps an accomplice of Jonathan Wild; stabbed *circum* 1726; *vide* MS."

My heart sank within me, and I really felt as if I might myself be stabbed at any

moment. But the worst was still to come. I had all this time been glancing from time to time, with a separate allowance of inquisitive dread, at an oblong closet which stood in one corner of the room. I was filled with an unlawful curiosity to know what this closet contained, and with trembling hands I slowly opened the door. I was in some degree prepared to see anything or any one—a ghost, a housebreaker, or Dr Barkum, cane in hand; and what I did see was a human skeleton, which seemed to greet me with a mournful grin. I could hear the beating of my heart as I again shut up the ghastly remains, and stole sideways out of the room. As I passed out at the door, I perceived, furthermore, a model scaffold, fitted with a drop and other peculiar appliances, and surmounted by a group of puppets, which I did not pause to

examine. My mind was now wrought into a highly nervous condition; and even when I had safely gained the drawing-room, I sat there with my back to the wall, until Mr Sutcliffe presently came in. He was almost immediately followed by my mother and father.

As I had been very kindly treated by Mr Sutcliffe in my trouble, I was now rather surprised to find my father serious and displeased, and my mother distressed beyond reason. My father at first only spoke in low tones to Mr Sutcliffe, at the same time casting cold glances at me; while my mother wrapped me in her arms, covered my face with her tears, and kept repeating, "How could you be so naughty, and give your father such pain?"

By degrees, however, matters were placed on a pleasanter footing. Mr Sutcliffe in-

sisted "that it could not be denied the boy's feelings had been hurt, and that he had shown a high spirit;" and my father was gradually brought to admit that there might be a good deal to be urged in my favour.

At last one of Mr Sutcliffe's myrmidons, otherwise the superintendent of police, sent in to say that he had discovered the stolen penholder, which had lately been sold for eighteenpence to a jeweller in a village near Dr Barkum's school. Upon hearing this intelligence, Mr Sutcliffe ordered the superintendent to seize the penholder, and to desire the honest jeweller's immediate attendance at Cumberland House. The superintendent departed in his dog-cart to execute these orders, and two hours afterwards Mr Sutcliffe conveyed my mother and father and myself in his carriage to Dr Barkum's house.

The learned Doctor received us at his door in person, and greeted Mr Sutcliffe and my parents with much politeness, though he took no sort of notice of my presence. We then all entered the house; my three protectors went into the drawing-room with Barkum, while I was left for a time in another room which communicated with the drawing-room by folding doors. Being very anxious to learn what was about to be done to me, I applied my ear to the keyhole of the folding doors and greedily listened. For I should not be telling the truth were I to state either that "I had never wilfully played the eavesdropper," or that "I was reluctantly compelled to hear all that passed." However, I will not fatigue the reader by giving a lengthy abstract of the conversation which I heard. Suffice it to say, Dr Barkum began by

announcing his intention of flogging me. My father then declared, amidst some interruption and remonstrance from his better half, that he should agree to my being flogged providing that Dr Barkum still thought such a punishment necessary, after he had heard what was to be alleged in my favour. Mr Sutcliffe next took up the theme, and having dwelt with evident relish on the share which he as a justice had taken in the matter, declared that the only thing remaining to be done was to introduce the jeweller, and cause him to identify the boy who had sold him the penholder.

This is the substance of all that I heard; and I had barely time to quit my post at the folding doors, and assume an attitude of penitence at a distant window, when I was summoned into the presence of Dr

Barkum and my deliverers. The jeweller was now in attendance, and he was at once conducted into the schoolroom. There, after some little delay, he amazed every one by identifying Fisher himself as the boy who had sold him the penholder!

When this result had been made known to my father and mother, they took their departure with Mr Sutcliffe. They did not attempt to conceal their satisfaction at the course matters had taken. Mr Sutcliffe, however, though he was in reality nearly ready to dance, chose to assume a stiff official bearing; and as he was leaving the house, conversed principally with the superintendent.

When they had all gone, and Fisher had been removed to a place of security in the house, I made a triumphal entry into the schoolroom. I was received with three

cheers; and Barkum withdrew, apparently bewildered at not having as yet flogged any one. The boys left their desks, and came to offer me their sincere congratulations; while even Marter, counterfeiting an expression of honest joy, gave me his hand, remarking that he was "right glad" all had ended so well. Perhaps, when this arch-traitor offered me his hand, I should have proudly drawn myself up and declined the proffered honour; but at ten years old, I had not enough heroism for that. The specious truism that "Boys are very like men," was manifested by the way in which my schoolfellows now treated me.

"I am so awfully glad," said one.

"Well done, old chap!" said another.

"What shall we do to Fisher?" said some.

"What a jolly sell for old Marter!" remarked others.

I was made the hero of the hour. Dr Barkum sent for me in the course of the afternoon, and for a few moments led me to fear, from his peculiar demeanour, that he intended to flog me after all. But he only lectured me for having run away; told me that he was "*in loco pawentis*," and then said, that although my mother and father had begged him to let me taste the birch if desirable, he had yet determined to let me off with an admonition.

The next day Fisher's father, who, in spite of the penurious nature of Fisher's crime, was reputed a man of great wealth, paid Dr Barkum a long visit, and then took his departure. Soon afterwards, we were all ordered to assemble in the schoolroom. We sat down at our desks, delightedly awaiting a scene of violent retribution; and Dr Barkum presently came in,

escorting the miserable prisoner, who sobbed in a manner which rather assuaged our indignation. We were undecided whether he would be birched, expelled, or merely caned in public, and sent to Coventry. What, then, was our surprise when Barkum, after saying that Fisher's father was "overwhelmed with gwief," and that Fisher himself "was vewy sowwy he had been so foolish," released him; told us to forget his offence; and dismissed us to the playground! Arrived there, Tyce and other leaders of public opinion held a council of war, after which a deputation was sent to apprehend Fisher. He was found hiding in the swimming-bath; but he was quickly taken up. Having been brought before a boys' tribunal, he was sentenced to offer me a public apology, and, in addition, to "run the gauntlet."

He told me, in a voice full of despair and terror, "That he was very sorry for having offended me."

"And for having told a *beastly bung,*" added Herbert Tyce.

"And for having told a bung," said Fisher.

"A *beastly bung,*" cried all the judges.

"A *beastly bung,*" said the poor prisoner.

Two ranks were next formed, facing each other, and each boy made knots in his handkerchief—and I believe some of the knots contained horse-chestnuts. Fisher was then caused to run down these ranks, which he did, bounding along, with his arms in a posture of defence before his face. He was made to do this twice; and the second time, just as he finished his course, he was somehow tripped up, and this caused him to fall with his face on the

gravel. Justice having been thus satisfied, the victim was left, morally and physically prostrate.

He received succour almost immediately in the person of Mr Marter, who, running up, tenderly raised him, at the same time inquiring, "'Oo 'as been hurting you?"

Fisher very sagely replied that he had tumbled down; and as we ran off to our game, we saw the amiable couple walk away together in the direction of the under-masters' room, where Marter occasionally regaled any special favourite with a glass of beer.

After my great escapade, I found my popularity more firmly established than it had ever been before; and even my enemy Marter seemed to have learnt a wholesome lesson, if not in charity, at all events in prudence.

CHAPTER VI.

I SHALL now ask the reader to suppose me spending my holidays at Hare Place, my home, not many miles from the important country town of Wolvenden. As to what my home was, I shall not give any special description of it myself, for I thus hope to avoid exciting either the envy or the contempt of my readers, whom I leave to imagine the domestic comfort of a tolerably wealthy country gentleman according to their own notions of fitness. Of my father, I beg to say he was a kind husband, an indulgent parent, and a foolish landlord. His virtues were many; for he was just,

honourable, kind-hearted, and sincere. His failings may all be summed up in one word, —he was weak. He was especially weak in constantly gratifying, to the great detriment of his own affairs, an unnatural craving for "business," for which he really possessed a peculiar inaptitude. He persisted in managing his own estate, long after it had plainly appeared that by employing an agent he would have at once saved money and escaped a certain amount of unpopularity. In his household the same weakness caused him to take upon himself many duties which his wife, or her housekeeper, were perfectly willing, and very much more fitted, to discharge. Of my mother, I can honestly say, that she was all that a tender, affectionate, devout woman of mediocre intellect could reasonably be expected to be. This is surely saying a great deal,

notwithstanding which, I must add that it is only the conviction that I should be considered a partial and unreliable witness which restrains me from saying that my mother was the most conspicuous ornament among her whole sex.

During the holidays that I am about to describe, one of the first measures which I took, after coming home, was to establish in the house a school of my own, where I endeavoured to inculcate in others some of the discipline I had learned at the hands of Dr Barkum. My father happened to have preserved the cap which he had worn at college, and he lent it to me, at my request, in order to support my new character. For a gown, I wore a black silk petticoat which I had contrived to procure from my mother's wardrobe; and I very soon armed myself with a cane. Thus equipped, like any other

schoolmaster, I cast about for pupils; and succeeded so well, that in a day I was able to range in front of me the head-gardener's son, James; a boy from the stable, called Carter; and two cousins of the name of Longstaffe, who had come over to spend the day with me.

I then began school by making the pupils read aloud. Carter was so illiterate that I soon had to cane him. He took his punishment very well, though he annoyed me by feigning to be more severely hurt than he really was. James also gave me some trouble. In his desire to enter into the spirit of the entertainment, he intentionally made several blunders, and I was compelled to cane him as well as Carter. So far I succeeded pretty well, but when it came to the turn of the elder Longstaffe to read, he flatly refused.

"What rot this is, Tom!" said he; "we're wasting the whole day."

"Silence!" said I.

"Ass!" said he.

Determined to quell such mutinous behaviour at once, I ordered him to prepare for punishment—that is, to partially undress himself. He only protruded his tongue at me, however; so I marched upon him, and called upon James and Carter to assist me.

Here, again, their natural stupidity upset my plans; for instead of helping me, they began to shout "Hurrah! Rebellion in the school!" and to throw their books into the air. At the same moment I was attacked by the two Longstaffes, who wrapped my black silk petticoat round my head, pushed me into a corner, and then rushed from the room. James and Carter also beat a retreat, and my school broke up, never to

reassemble. But I soon began to occupy my time with more exciting amusements.

My uncle had given me a small double-barrelled gun, and I was one day allowed to go out shooting, under the charge of a keeper. He took me at first to a place abounding with rabbits. On the other side of a hedge, by this spot, was a kind of hovel, inhabited by a reputed witch. My first shot was at a rabbit, which was close to the hovel when I fired. I missed the rabbit with both barrels, but, unfortunately, hit the reputed witch in the foot. I suppose she had been taking the air outside her cottage; but I had not seen her, nor, I presume, had the keeper. To the reputed witch the consequences of this act were not at all serious, indeed they were rather advantageous. To me, it is my opinion that they were not of the smallest consequence.

Nevertheless, as an honest historian, I will not suppress something which passed,—some words uttered by the reputed witch, although the disclosure may have a very bad effect upon the convictions of a superstitious reader.

At the time of the accident, or outrage, I was protected from the personal violence of the victim by my friend the keeper, who prevented her from coming through a gap in the hedge to attack me, and thus gave me time to make my escape. In the course of the day, however, towards evening, she came to my father, and lodged her complaint against me. He already knew what had happened; and having heard the old woman's version of the affair, expressed his sincere regret for what had taken place, and also tendered her a sovereign. Having received the sovereign, the reputed witch

hurled it, not in my father's face, but into a convenient spot whence she afterwards recovered it, and then raising her voice into a scream, denounced him and all his house, whose destruction she also predicted. "You will all come to want," said she; "Hare Place will change hands; and you will be buried like a dog."

She then left him and proceeded to the servants' hall, where she repeated her terrible prophecies in the hearing of the boy Carter and two maids. Swinton the butler presently came in, and desired her to leave the house. Having informed him "that before another Michaelmas came he would be food for worms," she obeyed. The sequel will supply all the comment that the incident just narrated requires.

For some time after my misadventure with my gun, I was not permitted to go on

any more shooting expeditions. Clandestinely, however, I contrived to kill a hare, which I buried. The keeper, whose knowledge of all that took place in connection with his department was nothing else than marvellous, exhumed my hare soon after I had buried it, and having earnestly begged me never to displease my father, I believe ate it for his dinner.

But I must now describe events of more importance which transpired at Hare Place, while I was enjoying my holidays there. We had in the house a footman of the name of White, a favourite servant of my father, who had almost brought him up under his own eye. White was the posthumous child of a celebrated poacher, who had been killed in a midnight affray; and my father, having first educated young White, had then employed him in the suc-

cessive posts of drudge, page-boy, and footman. The latter position he had now held for about five years, and had, in my father's opinion at least, fully repaid all the kindness which had been bestowed upon him. It was his practice always to consult my father as to the investment of his savings; while my mother was pleased by White's occasionally asking her to lend him a serious book, though he admitted that his favourite works were Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' and Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy.' Therefore, when this trusted and well-beloved retainer, soon after my coming home, was declared by the village surgeon to be afflicted with a most malignant form of gout, a hearty and almost general sympathy was immediately expressed for him; and he received the greatest care and at-

tention. The whole household waited on him. My father with his own hands gave him whisky and Vichy water; my mother caused chickens and pudding to be prepared for him; the gardener brought him grapes; and, in short, every one did their best to make him comfortable, and to promote his recovery. But in spite of all this, White's complaint did not amend; and at length his foot gave him such pain that he was unable to walk; whereupon the doctor, who was a very sensible man, ordered him not to do so. Then, by my father's directions, the patient was removed from his bedroom at the top of the house to a more spacious apartment lower down; and there he lay, day and night, his left foot enveloped in bandages. The butler, Swinton, I should have mentioned, did not join in the general commiseration expressed

for poor White; and was reported to have said that if he (Swinton) was to have the gout, nobody would come and nurse him —which was perfectly true.

I often visited White, and generally found him engaged in reflection. My father, however, more than once caught him engrossed in Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' The poor fellow apologised for what he called his presumption, but said, "I heard that you were going to Rome, next Easter, sir, and I was determined I'd know something about it." My father was much pleased with him, both for his intelligence and simplicity.

White and his malady had chiefly engrossed our attention for about a fortnight, when a very stirring incident took place. The house was plundered at night, nearly all the plate, and a great deal of other

valuable property being stolen. No noise had been heard by any one; and neither my father nor the police could come to any conclusion as to who the robbers could have been, or where they could have taken their booty. The detective who came down from London to inquire into the case, brought nothing but trouble into the house. My father would not be consoled for the loss of his plate; most of the servants began to talk of resigning their situations; and poor White, already severely shattered, was made the victim of a most heartless and wanton experiment. The detective, accompanied by Swinton the butler, went to the landing outside the footman's door, and there shouted "Fire!" at the top of his voice. White, being unable to move, uttered most piteous cries for help, and at the same time rang his bell

in such a frenzy of terror that he broke the bell-rope. Swinton explained what had been done as a joke; but his conduct made every one indignant, and we were not sorry that he took his departure soon afterwards.

The detective also went away in disgrace. The robbery occasioned every one more or less inconvenience; and a foolish housemaid caused me some uneasy nights by occasionally coming to look under my bed in quest of "a man." My father and mother were vexed also by having lost papers of some value; and I heard my father observe that the abstraction of one of these documents might some day be of more consequence than the loss of all his plate. The reputed witch, of whom I have made some mention in this chapter, had expressed great exultation on hearing of the burglary; and as she had for several

months neglected to pay her weekly rent of two shillings, my father was not sorry to hear, about this time, that she had voluntarily quitted her cottage, and had left our neighbourhood.

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE I returned to school, my friends the Sutcliffes came to pay us a visit—Mr Sutcliffe having been especially allured to Hare Place through its having so recently been the scene of a robbery. Under ordinary circumstances, nothing would have pleased me better than to have again beheld my little friend Helena; but it so chanced that I was just then passing through a phase of manly dignity which caused me to look upon her as a wholly unsuitable companion. She was not mischievous enough; she was unable to climb; she could not talk school slang; in short, she

had the misfortune to be a girl. For the first two days of her visit, therefore, I almost entirely left her alone.

The dignity of my sex made me not only thus neglect her, but, in my blindness, force my presence upon my elders and betters—namely, my father and Mr Sutcliffe. As an only son, I was permitted the indulgence of dining with my parents, though I was always led from the room when the ladies retired. Now, however, I resolved to sit over my wine like a grown-up man. One night, therefore, as soon as I had been taken to the drawing-room, I quietly left it, and returned to the gentlemen.

"Well, Tom," said my father, upon seeing me, "what do you want?"

"Nothing, papa," answered I.

He then good-naturedly resumed the conversation which I had interrupted. "I

have always believed," he said, "that if I had gone into business as a young man, I should have made a large fortune."

"Many people have thought the same," observed Mr Sutcliffe, adding, "if I had found it necessary to work for my bread, I should have become an Old Bailey barrister; and if I had, I'm very sure I should have risen — perhaps have been a judge, by now."

"I don't think you would have quite done for a judge, Sutcliffe," said my father, smiling, "for you would have betrayed too much relish in discharging your office."

"I should have been as grave as any man in assuming the black cap," said Mr Sutcliffe.

"Which is as much as to say that you would have enjoyed sentencing a man to death," said my father.

"It is a very terrible, a very awful responsibility," observed Mr Sutcliffe.

Upon this I laughed, and began eating some nuts. Both gentlemen looked at me, and at each other, in a significant manner, and Mr Sutcliffe presently said: "Don't you think, Allen, when two friends of a certain time of life get together, the presence of a third person of a less advanced age, rather restrains their free conversation?"

Understanding this hint, I hastened from the room, my cheeks burning, and for the rest of that evening was fain to content myself with the society of my mother and little Helena.

The next day I made another attempt to assert my importance. Soon after breakfast was finished, I saw my father and Mr Sutcliffe walking off together in the direc-

tion of a neighbouring farm; and I at once quitted Helena's side, and joined them. I found Mr Sutcliffe smoking a cigar, and being anxious to put matters on a comfortable footing at once, I asked him, "Is it jollier smoking in the open air than smoking in the house is?"

"Why, what do you know about smoking?" he replied; at the same time giving me, in playfulness, a pretty smart blow with his cane.

My father then increased my agony of body and mind by pulling my ear, and saying, "What have you done with Helena, Tom? Go and show her everything; you're not half a boy."

Deeply mortified, I returned to Helena; and being now in a very humble frame of mind, I was not long in discovering that although she did belong to the despised

sex, Helena was certainly my superior in the art of talking; and as she only used this superiority in an agreeable manner, she soon soothed my agitation, and made me very happy in her society.

One day, shortly before the Sutcliffes left us, we received a visit from a Mr Ralph Graham, who was second cousin to Mr Sutcliffe, and slightly acquainted with my father. Mr Graham brought with him his son Philip, who afforded us all some amusement. He was about eleven years old, and was attired in the dress of the Blue-coat School, to which he belonged. The first peculiarity which he exhibited was at luncheon, when, having been invited to put a few apples in his pocket, he opened a large hollow place in his gown, and instantly launched three apples and a bun into it. My father good-humouredly observed,

"You seem to have a famous pocket; take some cake as well, if you have room for it."

Philip once more opened the cavern, and threw a large slice of cake into it.

But I must here say a few words as to Philip's father, Mr Ralph Graham. In the first place, as to his Christian name, I cannot help regretting my present inability to dispel a really monstrous delusion common to nearly all experienced readers; for I am compelled to admit that this "Ralph" was certainly more or less of a rascal. His rascality was principally shown in a practice he had of floating small companies (I will not waste time by inventing amusing names for them), or embarking upon schemes of speculation with other people's capital instead of with his own. He had now come to Hare Place in order to ask for my father's

substantial support in a plan of this sort, which he was then devising. I will not spoil whatever interest the sequel may possess by here stating whether Mr Ralph Graham had any influence for evil or for good in my father's affairs; but I trust that if any such influence is disclosed in the course of this history, its nature and extent will be carefully noted by the reader.

On the first occasion of my seeing Mr Graham and his son, it was to the latter that I paid most of my attention. I endeavoured to make myself agreeable to him, but met with indifferent success. He took a great fancy to a knife which I had shown him, and he asked me "how much I would take for it?"

I told him that he might keep it, if he pleased. "Are you *greening?*" he asked. "No; take it," said I, giving him the knife.

Upon which he immediately threw it into the great pocket; and then, afraid lest I should change my mind, gathered up the skirts of his gown, and ran at full speed to his father.

When Mr Ralph and Master Philip had taken their departure, Helena observed that Philip was "a horrid boy," and I fear we all of us agreed that he was.

I must now take a last fond glimpse of Dr Barkum and his academy for young gentlemen.

CHAPTER VIII.

I WAS nearly fourteen years old, and had spent about three years under the periodical care of Dr Barkum, when it was decided that I should be sent to Eton. I had only two more days to pass at a private school, and I looked forward to my fast-approaching emancipation with mingled feelings. I was pleased at the prospect of making a step in life, but I felt no little regret at having to resign the position I had gradually gained, which was one of considerable consequence. For I was now the leader of the other boys in every game and diversion,

and in every scheme of pleasure or mischief. I was, in fact, a ruler on a small scale — my system of government being a benevolent despotism, only tempered by the supervision of the masters. My subjects were now testifying their glee at the near approach of the holidays, by pounding one another with their fists, exclaiming as they did so :—

> "Last day but one,
> Take it all in fun."

Of this adage, Dr Barkum himself did not seem to approve; for he caned, birched, thumped, and bumped his pupils up to the last moment. Before being dismissed to our homes, we had to take part in an important entertainment, some particulars of which I must here record.

The school year was divided into three terms, but only at the end of one term was

this festival held. The proceedings consisted in a distribution of prizes, some athletic sports, and a banquet. This year, the lord-lieutenant of the county, a nobleman who was seeking to identify himself with educational and church matters, presided. Lord L—— was exceedingly fond of office of any kind; and the honour that he conferred upon Dr Barkum, in consenting to distribute his prizes, was certainly repaid by the delight which he himself derived from the occasion. At eleven o'clock, Lord L—— arrived, and presently took his seat upon a prepared dais in the schoolroom. He was supported on his right hand by our worthy principal, and on his left by a certain popular Eton master. The latter—although he disliked Barkum—encouraged these gatherings, from the friendship he had formerly borne for Barkum's

predecessor and father-in-law, Dr Wildbull.

Every one being assembled, and all being in readiness, Lord L—— rose; and having overcome his desire to laugh outright with enjoyment, in slow and solemn accents delivered himself somewhat as follows:—

"Dr Barkum, ladies and gentlemen,—We are assembled on this happy occasion for the purpose of rewarding the successful efforts which Dr Barkum's scholars have made during the past term. Upon me has devolved the honour, or I may say the satisfaction, of presenting the successful competitors with the laurels which they have won. Whatever slight diffidence I may feel in performing my allotted task, I am sure that that diffidence is materially lessened, I may say almost dispelled, when I see at my side, ready with his support, a

gentleman so eminently and honourably associated with the question of the successful training of youth—I allude to our friend Mr H——. I believe I am accurate in stating that Mr H—— and myself were contemporaries at Eton." [Some whispering here took place between the speaker and the gentleman to whom he had referred.] "Well," Lord L—— resumed, "if we were not exactly contemporaries, we at least both of us owe whatever acquirements we may possess to the same noble institution, to Eton, where I trust many of you are likewise going." [Here, those boys who were going to Eton applauded; and the future Harrovians and others looked scornful.] "To give away the prizes in this room," continued his lordship, "is a pleasure which has fallen to my lot more than once before; and—it may not be within the recollection

of some of those here present, but—I also once attended a similar ceremony in the time of Dr Wildbull; a gentleman whose name is still honoured and cherished, not only at the great seat of learning with which he was more especially connected, but in every scientific circle throughout the length and breadth of Europe! I say that I have presided, or that I have been present, upon former occasions such as this; but this occasion I shall mark with a red letter in my calendar, for I have the great satisfaction of knowing that never before has the school been in such a flourishing state; never before have the able and energetic labours of Dr Barkum and the gentlemen whose pride it is to assist him, been brought to such perfection; and never before, so far as I can understand, has the general moral tone that prevails, been so

healthy, and so creditable to all concerned in the wellbeing and prosperity of the school. I will detain you, ladies and gentlemen, no longer; but will merely mention, in conclusion, that it will now be my gratification to award the prizes to an unusually large number of young people, to whom, collectively, I wish continued success in their journey through life; and to whom, individually, I may perhaps address a few more words."

Amidst much cheering and stamping, Lord L—— resumed his seat; and the boys who were to receive prizes then came to him in turn. In due course my own name was announced, for I was so fortunate as to have won the Greek prize. As I came forward, Dr Barkum observed that I had only commenced learning Greek a year ago, but that I had made more

rapid progress than many others who had begun to study Greek sooner. Upon this, Lord L—— asked me, "Have you ever heard of a fable called 'The Hare and the Tortoise'?" I answered that I had; and his lordship, good-humouredly smiling, continued, "Now, which have you been—the Hare or the Tortoise?" Instead of trying to follow his real drift, I just weighed in my own way the relative merits of the two beasts, and said, "the Tortoise;" whereupon Dr Barkum bent an evil glance upon me, and made at the same time a slight and almost mechanical motion with his hand —while everybody else, including Lord L——, burst out laughing. However, they gave me my prize.

In the athletic sports which followed, I earned more honours; and I also distinguished myself at the banquet which

brought the official festivity of the day to an end. But disgrace was in store for me that very night. We had an ancient custom of spending, or rather of attempting to spend, our last night in sleepless carouse and festivity. In my capacity of king, or "benevolent despot," I had full power to have put an end to this ceremony altogether; but a natural taste for mischief, and also a due regard to my popularity, made me rather choose to superintend the carousal, and see that it and all the nocturnal festivities, were conducted with prudence and proper precaution. When we had retired to our dormitories, therefore, I commenced matters by sending out two sharp little boys as sentinels at a distant stair-case, whence the approach of Dr Barkum could be seen and duly communicated to us in time. Having done this, I sent

word to the occupants of each of the three other dormitories besides my own, that the business of the night might commence; or, in other words, that supper could be served at once.

In my own room, tenanted by ten boys in all, we were soon assembled round my bed in our night-shirts, and we ate and drank very comfortably for upwards of a quarter of an hour. Then a slight noise outside caused us all to pause, and to regard one another with faces of gloomy inquiry. In another moment our two sentinels rushed into the room, and each uttering the word "*Cavē!*" leaped into bed, and apparently fell into a deep sleep. All the revellers also ran quickly to their beds, and to all appearance became instantly overcome by slumber. For my own part, I had just found time to sweep into my

bed a mass of unconsumed pastry and orange-peel, and to follow the general example, when the door was pushed open, and Dr Barkum, attired in a dressing-gown, and carrying a lighted candle, entered the room.

After looking sternly about him, he demanded—"Was any boy out of his bed just now?"

He repeated this question, and then, slowly walking through the room, held his lighted candle near to each boy's face, in succession. We one and all bore this ordeal with fortitude, though the snores of one lad, Drinkwater, were so exaggerated, that I was in a cold sweat for him.

At length Dr Barkum finished his inspection; and when he had blown out his candle, and shut the door with a bang, we believed that we were once more in peace.

After a little listening, and some whispering, we all rose from our beds, and recommenced feasting. The two trusty sentinels were now rewarded for the vigilance which they had shown, and liberally supplied with food to fortify them for a renewal of their labours. After we had heard their account of the enemy's first appearance near their post, Drinkwater, the boy who had snored so dangerously, told us that he had been more nearly detected than any one else.

"I thought it was a false alarm," said he, "and I'd just got up again to have a look, when I caught sight of his old top-knot——"

"*Did you?*" said a terrible voice; and in an instant Dr Barkum was upon us. The weapon with which he had temporarily armed himself was a hair-brush, and with impartial vigour he assailed us all for some

minutes, making use of the bristles, as well as the back of the brush, with astonishing skill and swiftness. For Drinkwater a more formal castigation was reserved. He was led away by the ear, and presently returned, sobbing and snivelling from the effects of a hearty birching which he had received in Dr Barkum's dressing-room.

After this, I deemed it necessary to omit all that remained of our programme; and I even gave permission to the boys in my room to go to sleep at once, (contrary to all precedent). The next day I bade Dr Barkum a long farewell; and the reader, if he pleases, may do the same.

CHAPTER IX.

THE hero of Cumberland House; the cricket and football captain; the umpire and referee; the benevolent despot, was now compelled to mingle with the common herd once more. In plainer words, I was sent to Eton. I very soon experienced some of the disadvantages of having been a great boy at a little school, previous to becoming a little boy at a great school. I may compare my altered position to that of a negro king sold into captivity with some of his subjects. He would be regarded with indifference by his masters; while of those over whom he had formerly ruled, but

who were now his fellow-slaves, some would treat him with base insolence, and others would secretly pay him the same homage as before.

On going to Eton with some other old schoolfellows, I received little notice from the older boys, beyond being sometimes called upon to tell them my name. Drinkwater, who had lately been my flatterer and courtier, laid aside his mask, and became disagreeably familiar, and impudently haughty, by turns; but certain other little boys who had once been under my sway, and who were now allowed to be on an equality with me, continued, whenever they found opportunity, to show me their respect as of old.

The first sign I perceived of Drinkwater's treason was in the train, when, in company with a number of other lower boys, we were

going to Eton for the first time. On hearing that I was going to the house of a certain "Dame," which he had not heard before, he burst out laughing, and said that for his part he was going to "D———'s, a much better place." After we had been examined also, I was only placed in the "lower fourth," while the hypocritical Drinkwater was given a higher position, ("up to," as we called it, a master named Crowe), and he began to treat me with downright patronage. Instead of daily seeking me out to recount his adventures, and compare them with mine, he now used to hasten past me, when we happened to meet, merely giving me a nod, or calling out, "Morning, Allen! morning!" Or else, he would pretend not to see me at all, which sometimes obliged me to throw a stone at him, or use some

other violent means of recalling him to his senses.

I was not altogether without friends, however. I formed an alliance with a boy named Warburton, with whom I used to mess. He and I were both of us inclined to be idle in our studies, but energetic and ambitious in the games. Also we were both fagged by the same boy, a youth named Martin, whom we both heartily disliked. Martin was not much older than we were, but he was such a good scholar, that he stood higher in the school than any lad of his own age. He used to delight in fagging us; for he not only gave us the ordinary tasks which we expected to perform, but practised his wit and learning in inflicting on us ingenious or extraordinary punishments, and in lecturing us at preposterous length.

One afternoon, as Warburton and I were sitting in my room, going through the form of preparing some work for the following day, Martin shouted for me, and, when I had obeyed the summons, seized me by the nape of my neck, conducted me into his room, and thus spoke:—

"Now then, my facetious young friend, pray how did you put away my tea-things the other night?"

"I put them in the cupboard, Martin," answered I.

"In the cupboard, did you?" repeated he. "Now just look in that cupboard, and then tell me whether you aren't a lazy, cocky, young ape."

Feeling very much like the negro king in captivity, I obeyed the first part of this request, and beheld several handsome prize-books lying covered with a sort of cheese

or butter, which had been formed by the milk overturned from the milk-jug. For my carelessness in putting away his tea-things, and the damage thus caused to his books, Martin made me write out fifty lines of Greek from the Odyssey.

Soon after this occurrence I was met by Drinkwater, who, instead of passing on after his usual fashion of late, begged me to speak with him for a few minutes. Thinking he was probably in some difficulty, in which he required my assistance, I resolved to be generous, and walked aside with him to hear what he had to say. He very gravely addressed me as follows :—

" Allen, as we were at Barkum's together, and all that, I thought I'd just give you a little advice. You are getting such a bad name with the fellows. You know, you

won't mind my saying so, but you are awfully *cocky*——"

At this point I interrupted his sermon by giving him a smart blow on the nose; whereupon he displayed more good-nature, positive virtue, or "magnificent courage,"[1] than I think I have ever met with at any other time; for he burst out laughing—as he often did—and exclaimed: "*Oh, Pax! Pax! I was only chaffing.*"

Having given him a few cuffs, and having thrown his hat into a neighbouring tree, I let him go: and the correction had a good effect upon him, for thenceforward he became friendly but respectful, as of old. But I could not extort submission by any such summary means from the masters, with whom my idleness brought me into

[1] A political or "polemical" phrase of recent invention. The word "cowardice" is nearly synonymous.

very unpleasant relations. In due course I was subjected to the barbarous punishment of six strokes with the birch rod; and I may observe that, though I hardly felt the first five cuts, I did feel the sixth cut; and that the main results of the degrading torture were, that I experienced a comfortable sense of warmth, and resolved to be more industrious for the future.

But I had little time for carrying out my good resolution; for very soon after my first introduction to the birch, I was seized with scarlet fever, and immediately sent off to the Sanatorium. I suffered very severe illness for about three weeks, and during that time, my mother took up her abode at Windsor, and came to nurse me as often as she was permitted. Then my condition began to improve. My mother, who had many demands on her time, returned to

her home; and all that there remained for me to do, was to recover as speedily as possible.

As soon as I was well enough to know what I was about, and who my friends were, I recognised Drinkwater. He lay in the bed next to mine; and having been nearly at death's door, was now very calm, reflective, and penitent. Soon after renewing acquaintance with one another, he and I amused ourselves by tearing off portions of our skin, and writing our names on the horrible parchments thus obtained. Upon what had been the sole of my foot, I wrote, "Allen, his foot;" but Drinkwater, taking up what had been the palm of his hand, wrote "Hyslop" upon it.

"What's 'Hyslop' mean?" I asked him.

"It's my name," answered he.

I was utterly bewildered, and seriously

thought that I must be still delirious. But he presently explained that he had for ever parted with his original surname, which his father, for no sufficient reason, and with scarcely any legal formality, had chosen to alter to one that pleased him better. Still, even after the mystery had been explained, I for some time continued to view Drink-water, or rather Hyslop, with some uneasy doubt. As soon as we were convalescent, we began to amuse ourselves with various suitable games, such as draughts and back-gammon. But he was not content with such innocent diversions. In an evil moment, he persuaded a brother of his (who was allowed to visit the Sanatorium) to purchase him a saloon pistol; and with this weapon we all three disported ourselves in a garden where we were permitted to walk for a short time every day.

Once, the two Hyslops and I, no authorities being on the alert, were each firing by turns at a little pyramid which we had arranged for the purpose; the strange Hyslop was in the act of re-erecting the pyramid, which I had just overturned, when a slight report was heard, and he fell to the ground, dead!

His brother had shot him in the head. He had supposed that the pyramid was ready, and had merely meant to show his address by hitting it again just as it was set up. The fatal accident caused much distress and consternation, as may well be imagined; and the coroner's jury, who in those days were not given to confusing their duties and responsibilities with those of the judges, on this occasion added to their verdict a very reasonable hope,—viz., that the school authorities would take steps

to prevent the recurrence of such accidents in the future.

The sad disaster made a profound impression upon my mind. But soon afterwards I was pronounced fit to travel; my father, and Colonel Thomas, my uncle, came and escorted me home, and my thoughts were diverted from the melancholy cast into which they had fallen.

CHAPTER X.

I HAD not been at home for very long when I suffered a serious relapse, which made such inroads into my constitution that my return to Eton became impossible. As soon as I was well enough to proceed with my education, my parents made inquiries for a tutor under whose care they might place me; and I was sent, in the meantime, to spend two or three months with my uncle Thomas, at a sanitary resort on the south coast. We were attended by White, my father's favourite servant, who had now recovered from his attack of gout; but whom, nevertheless, it was

hoped the change of climate might further benefit.

I passed away my time very happily with my uncle Thomas. For he was excessively generous, also good-natured and amusing, and, moreover, tolerably young. He used to entertain me with endless anecdotes of a military character. He seldom talked of campaigns, for he had always served in the Guards, and had sold out before the Crimean War; but he stirred my enthusiasm for his profession no less surely by his tales of:—"an objectionable young man we had once, who had to leave us;"—"an old quarter-master in my battalion, who used to dye his hair;"—or, "some rather good fun the young fellows had one night, at the time we were waiting for the Chartists."

But the Colonel was not the only old friend I saw at this time; for Mr Sutcliffe

and his daughter were also paying a visit to the sanitary resort. Helena was now sixteen years old; and though I do not at all consider that this is the most attractive period in a girl's life, she was certainly a very pretty and engaging little creature. She and I used to ride together for a portion of the day; but she was a good deal occupied in study with her governess and a local drawing-master. Her father, however, was constantly at our house. He had a strong friendship for my uncle, and an attachment, I believe, for me; yet there is no doubt that the person who chiefly interested him was White the footman.

Once, at luncheon, as White was pouring out a glass of wine for Mr Sutcliffe, the latter suddenly started, and gave a deep contraction to his brow. He then asked my uncle, White having left the room,

whether the gouty favourite had ever been suspected of complicity in the great robbery at Hare Place.

"Poor fellow! certainly not," answered my uncle; and he explained how White had been quite unable to move at the time referred to.

Mr Sutcliffe then said that he was perfectly satisfied, and that he had merely been joking. But I heard him presently murmur to himself, "He's an impostor, and a blackguard too, for all that."

On another occasion, Mr Sutcliffe asked me to show him all the rooms in our house.

"I want to see," said he, "whether you get any sun in those top rooms of yours."

I took him into every room in the house, and at last into White's bedroom. There, having satisfied himself that a room with a southerly aspect did occasionally receive

some of the sun's rays, Mr Sutcliffe suddenly pounced upon the pillow of White's bed, exclaiming—

"Why, what's this?"

But he had found only an odd volume of Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;' discovering which, he appeared at once amused and disappointed.

It must not be supposed, however, that Mr Sutcliffe spent all, or even most, of his time in riding his favourite hobby. He now bestowed a great deal of attention upon his daughter Helena, whom he saw, under his very eye, blossoming from girlhood into womanhood. He seemed to love her more tenderly than he had ever loved her before; and she certainly returned his affection to his fullest desire, by ever showing herself ready, not only to meet his wishes, but to anticipate them. I have mentioned these

facts because I should wish the reader to bear them in mind when I next introduce Helena Sutcliffe to his notice, amidst other scenes, and under very different circumstances.

After I had spent some ten weeks with my uncle, my parents wrote to say that they had found me a tutor, to whose care I was to be consigned without more delay. He was a Frenchman, and his name was Tabourot. He lived in his native land, but his pupils were all English, excepting an officer of the Swedish army, and a little Spaniard called Requiendo.

It is not my intention to give a faithful account of my life with Monsieur Tabourot, or of all that he himself did and said to my personal knowledge. He was just such a man as the reader will probably imagine him to have been; that is, he was court-

eous and honourable, pompous, and somewhat ridiculous. He taught his own language with complete satisfaction to himself, and with advantage to those of his pupils who were really at all willing to learn. For my own part, I had been early trained to a practical acquaintance with French; and though I took no delight in a dry study of the rudiments, I maintained and improved my proficiency in the proper pronunciation of the language, and in the art of fluent conversation. I also acquired, but only by ordinary observation, a considerable insight into the habits and character of the people; but there the benefit I derived from being sent to Monsieur Tabourot came to an end. After I had been with him for about a year, I wrote home, begging that I might be recalled from exile. My father did not immediately accede to my request;

but in the end he complied with it, my mother having told him that the climate of France did not agree with me.

So I returned to my home, and my parents were once more compelled to face the difficulty of having on their hands a youth whose normal condition was that of a schoolboy, but who, owing to circumstances, had to be provided for in some exceptional manner. They made inquiries,—of which I did not hear the nature or extent,—for another tutor to whom they might send me; and they presently decided that I should go to a gentleman of the name of Vish, who lived in the north of England. My father now, for the first time, told me that he had come to the conclusion that I ought to choose some profession; and accordingly, as a week remained before the time for my leaving

home, I immediately devoted a portion of that interval to the important matter my father had intrusted to me.

As I was at this time at the *enthusiastic age*, I very naturally selected the military life, as furnishing a perfect combination of Duty, Pleasure, and Romance.[1] My uncle Thomas pretended to be neutral in his advice, and to be unwilling to influence me; but I could plainly see that he was pleased with me for wishing to enter the service to

[1] Nearly every youth once in his life wishes to be a soldier, and in this fact can be found the solution of a question, which, when it has to be faced in a time of panic, will be found most disagreeably pressing. The use of the terms, "compulsory service" and "conscription," has done much harm. A "national repugnance" would certainly be found to dragging middle-aged men from their hearths or desks, in order to clothe them for the first time in scarlet. But no opposition of importance would be offered to the course of taking every young man who has reached the *enthusiastic age*, drilling him at the nearest depot, and returning him uninjured and greatly improved to his friends, with the understanding that his services might possibly be required at some future period.

which he had belonged. My father, however, upon hearing what were my sentiments, declared "that he was surprised I had no fancy for the bar,"—which I believe was totally untrue. He, however, said that he should not oppose my wishes, if at the end of a year they were still the same.

CHAPTER XI.

As I was departing for the distant home of Mr Vish, my father, instead of giving me his blessing, furnished me with some modern equivalents in the form of a sum of money and a cheque-book. He did this, he said, from the conviction that a boy should never be injudiciously stinted, but should be fairly given whatever he is to receive, in order that he may, while he is still young, learn something of the value of money. I need hardly say that I applauded these liberal sentiments from the bottom of my heart. I was now sixteen years old, and consequently, when I left my parents,

I experienced the sensations of budding importance and independence, mingled with a slight form of the discomfort called "home-sickness."

I found that Mr Vish, my new tutor, was married, but without any family, though I believe two children of his had died in infancy. I afterwards learnt that he had been ordained; but that, as soon as he had found his holy office to interfere with his tutelary functions, he had without any formality called himself a layman. Mr Vish might properly be described as a man of method; for he observed a method in almost all that he did. He once told us himself, that he had a method of getting out of bed: that he swung himself out in such a manner that his feet should land in a pair of slippers which lay at certain angles upon the floor. He observed method in

eating his breakfast; for he arranged before him in proper quantities all that he intended to consume during the meal; also he crunched his bread in such a manner as to sound if he were eating toast, I suppose in order that his subsequent transition to real toast should not startle his palate. His eyes were downcast, and he seemed to be constantly counting with his fingers. Of course he taught in a methodical manner; and he preferred the method of teaching by formula. Nevertheless Mr Vish was the very reverse of what is called a practical man. He had contrived a fixed method for pleasing his wife; but it was in reality nothing more than a regulation against exasperating her. Mrs Vish, who told me this, also said that her husband had a method or formula by which he hoped to reach heaven! But he was not so high-

minded, or so confident, as to make it public.

Of Mrs Vish I shall have more to relate hereafter; suffice it now to say that she was a woman of very odd character, and that she and her husband did not seem to be on very loving terms. (By which I do not mean to imply that he ever beat her.)

Of the pupils, besides myself, there were three. One of them was a man who totally differed from the ordinary stamp of pupil, and who, indeed, was quite unlike most of his fellow-creatures. His name was Garbold: he was an orphan, and possessed of considerable property in Wales. He was twenty-four years old, and was thus undergoing tuition rather late in life. He said, however, that his education had been neglected. Nevertheless, he had an extensive knowledge of general literature and history,

and was a fair Latin scholar. He was a very good-natured, amusing companion; a firm friend, and not an implacable enemy. Mr Garbold professed to hold very extraordinary principles; and he cherished some very singular prejudices. He maintained that the human race should be divided into only two classes—serfs and their masters. For men, he advocated polygamy, and even grosser doctrines; but for women, he condemned everything of the kind; and declared that Providence, in arranging the proportion between the two sexes, had held the same opinions as he held. In person, Mr Garbold was well favoured. Although under the middle height, he was very powerfully built; he had an aquiline nose, and very pleasing blue eyes. His head inclined to baldness; he wore large whiskers and moustaches; and

he was generally mistaken for a man of forty.

Another of the pupils was a youth named Pillett. He was preparing to matriculate. Nothing about him is particularly worthy of record; but I may mention that he was studious and quietly behaved, and, at the same time, fond of scandal and mischief-making.

Besides Garbold and Pillett, there was a pupil of the name of Dundas who was studying with Mr Vish. He had lately been expelled from Harrow, for some notorious acts of defiance. He was not a little vain of this circumstance, for which I must confess that I also respected him. He and I soon became intimate friends; for besides being only a little older than I was, Dundas was going into the army. I used to believe that he had a thorough acquaint-

ance with military matters, and I often listened to his advice. The following fragments of conversation, will fairly disclose the degree of wisdom which distinguished us both at this time :—

ALLEN. — I think the service must be very jolly. You're thought a lot of; and you have lots of sport; and you go to all sorts of rum places.

DUNDAS.—Yes; only you want lots of money. I believe it's a very good dodge to go first into a West Indian regiment; then you get your promotion in no time, as all the other fellows die, and you exchange into a crack regiment at home.

ALLEN.—That must be very jolly. By the by, Dundas, what ought a chap to be able to live on in a crack regiment?

DUNDAS. — Well, you want £300 a-year; but you get two chargers kept

for nothing in the cavalry, and you can hunt one of them.

ALLEN.—How awfully jolly! I'm going into the cavalry, if my governor lets me.

DUNDAS.—I'm going into the light infantry. That's why I wear my hat rather on one side, you know.

ALLEN.—I see. I suppose there's nothing like the service for a fellow, nowadays?

DUNDAS. — Oh, nothing! You knock about for a few years, and then you marry, and settle down. Every fellow ought to have a good fling before he settles down, oughtn't he?

ALLEN.—Oh yes, and see something of the world!

DUNDAS. — The wildest chaps always make the best husbands.

ALLEN.—Oh, much the best. How well that meerschaum's colouring!

DUNDAS.—Yes. I've had it a good long time; and I kept it wrapped in chamois-leather at first.

Thus used we to discourse, with satisfaction to ourselves, and without injury to anybody else. I remained very steadfast to my intention of entering the army; and when my father presently wrote to me, observing "that the army was an idle life," and that "he hoped I was not only fascinated by a red coat," his remarks had the effect of still further strengthening my resolution. "I love the sort of idleness which he means," thought I; "and it will be pleasant, as he suggests, to wear a handsome uniform."

Both my father and Mr Vish showed some folly in their way of treating me with regard to my profession. My father must have known that I meant to be a soldier,

and he should have found something wiser to say than that the army was an idle life. I believe, however, that he was somewhat prejudiced against my plan, by recollecting the extravagance which his brother (my uncle the Colonel) had shown when he had served in the Guards. But Mr Vish had no proper excuse for making me learn more Greek and Latin than ever, to the neglect of mathematics. His reason for taking that course was, that he did not believe I was going into the army at all; but supposed that, being at the *enthusiastic age*, I thought it right to make a show of wishing to be a soldier, when I was really going to Oxford or Cambridge like other young men.

I soon began to form a closer intimacy with young Dundas, from whom I received an intelligent sympathy with my future de-

signs. He kept a horse, and this made me respect him even more than the distinction of his having been expelled from Harrow. When he used to mount his horse, and go in quest of adventure in the neighbourhood, I longed to accompany him; and I should have written to my father, asking him to enable me to do so, had I not been saved all trouble by the extraordinary good-nature of Mr Garbold, who one day came to me and said "that he would send for one of his animals, which were down in Wales doing nothing, and that I could have the use of him for as long as I pleased."

I gratefully accepted this kind offer, and was soon afterwards able to ride out with Dundas on his expeditions. We presently formed an eager desire to follow the hounds, and our sole difficulty in gratifying this wish was, that there were no

hounds in that part of the country for us to follow.

Having consulted a newspaper, however, we made out that a pack from another county would meet one day in the next week, at a place about forty miles from Mr Vish's house. We determined to have a day's sport, and accordingly applied to our preceptor for permission to be absent, which he granted, though not until after the intercession of his wife and of Mr Garbold. We set forth one afternoon, with the design of reaching a certain town that night, and hunting the following day. We took the greatest delight in our excursion, especially in the importance which we fancied belonged to us on account of our taking horses with us in the train. A groom in the service of Mr Garbold accompanied us; and it was well for our horses that he did

so, for Dundas had insisted, against my judgment, that a horse, for one day previous to his being hunted, should have nothing to eat except a little gruel.

Having arrived at the town which was our destination, we proceeded to the principal inn, and there dined after the manner of two old gentlemen of eighty. For we each tried to drink a separate bottle of port, and declared "that no port was to be got nowadays." Having retired to bed, I dreamt of five-barred gates, double posts and rails, and various incidents in an imaginary chase. My dream was distressing; for I fancied that I was hunting in my night-shirt, and that Dundas had ridden off with my other clothes. This sleeping thought had been suggested by a waking reality, as, for some time past, I had been brooding with great mortification upon the costume

which I was really going to wear, and which simply consisted of a low-crowned hat, a tweed coat and waistcoat, and light-coloured breeches and gaiters. Dundas, however, had tried to console me, by saying, "that it was much better form not to come regularly got up."

The next day ("big with fate," as we imagined) we were eating a large breakfast, supplemented by cherry-brandy as a sporting delicacy, when Mr Garbold's groom appeared and told us that he could hear nothing about any hounds, and thought that we must have made some mistake. The landlord soon afterwards came in, and with his aid we discovered that the hounds we were seeking, actually met at a smaller place, of the same name, some eighty miles distant.

CHAPTER XII.

HAVING returned from our ill-planned and untimely expedition, we were subjected to a good deal of ridicule; and for several days Mr Garbold used to inquire "Whether we intended to hunt?" or "Where did the hounds meet?"

A little mortification, however, was very necessary for me at this time, for I was exposed to a danger which threatened to inflate my pride, and to do a great deal of injury to my morals. Mrs Vish, of whom I have as yet said very little, began to favour me with tokens of a regard which I could not at first understand, but which

presently became quite unmistakable. I was not long in perceiving that this state of things was no secret to Mr Garbold. I had already noticed that between him and Mrs Vish there was evidently a very intimate understanding; and he seemed to possess some kind of authority over her, for she never interrupted or contradicted what he said, whereas she seemed to be fond of disputing with any one else, and especially with her husband.

The first assault I received from Mrs Vish was, I suspected, at the instigation of Mr Garbold. He had told her that I could tell fortunes, and that I was particularly eager to tell hers; and the consequence was, that one day, while I was sitting alone, she came in, and without any embarrassment begged me to disclose her future to her.

Before I had time to answer her, to my great amazement she laid her hand in mine, but seemed to be struggling to prevent laughing. With a gravity which was really caused by shyness more than by anything else, I examined her palm, but for some time could say nothing. At length, remembering some fragments of the fortune which a gipsy had once foretold for me, I managed to mutter something which appeared to satisfy Mrs Vish.

Assuming now the air of a student whose perplexity had been happily relieved, she thanked me in the most earnest manner, and then entered into a long discourse upon spirit-rapping, table-turning, and similar topics. At first I was so simple as to suppose that her enthusiasm was genuine, and I was therefore very much surprised when she, having related "an authenticated

story" of the appearance of a ghost, told me that she believed it was "all stuff."

I quietly remarked "that I thought so too." Upon which, Mrs Vish told me "that I was dreadfully sarcastic."

The ringing of the dinner-bell put a stop to this curious interview; and after dinner (which we had in the middle of the day), I amused myself in company with Dundas, and for that day saw no more of Mrs Vish.

The next morning, however, she again sought me out, and this time her discourse was of phrenology.

She examined my head, and declared that one bump she discovered was the largest she had ever seen of the kind. During these investigations, which Mrs Vish caused to extend over a space of several days, I remained stolidly blind,

or rather insensible, to the ulterior aims which she evidently had in view; and I was astonished to find how persistent she was in continuing this deception. She purchased a small bust, and a treatise by Combe; and at dinner Mr Garbold used to ask us "Whether we had found any more bumps?" At last, however, Mrs Vish began to neglect the science of phrenology, and to talk more of the internal dispositions and faculties which that art is said to disclose. She was enthusiastic about the pleasures of friendship, and the ennobling effects of confidence between two minds held together by a common bond. This I found very novel and interesting; and as in all her discourse she constantly flattered or praised me, I began to like her more and more, and at last felt some degree of filial affection for her.

I quarrelled with Dundas upon his saying — "Do leave that fool of a woman, and come off somewhere with me;" and as she was always good-tempered and complimentary, and as I never heard her swear, I found her society rather an agreeable relief from that of my male companions. I was presently obliged to make overtures of peace to Dundas, for one day Mrs Vish asked me to borrow his horse for her, in order that I might take her with me for a ride. Dundas appeared very glad to be reconciled, but declared, with a hearty oath, that Mrs Vish should never have the use of his horse.

As I have said, Mrs Vish had inspired me with "filial" affection, but this I found it impossible to make her understand. When she narrated, even with tears, misfortunes and hardships which she told me

that she had suffered, I only said, "What a shame!" or "Fancy!" Indeed, in her frequent accounts of her past life, I noticed so many discrepancies and inconsistencies, that they soon excited in me very little compassion. I showed her in many ways that I did not intend to follow the odious path into which she intended to entangle me, but she very rarely betrayed any discouragement.

One day we were seated upon a tombstone together. I was complacently hearing how "I had looked as black as night" at some observation which Mr Vish had made; how "my lip had curled" at some remark from Pillett; how, in short, I was a very fine young fellow,—when Mrs Vish, without any immediate warning, said—"O Tom! do you love me?"

It is very strange, yet perfectly true,

that, to my eternal honour, I replied, "No, I don't."

But this did not baffle her, for she said at once—"No; I know you don't. You despise us all. Don't you?"

"Not 'despise,' Mrs Vish," answered I, colouring deeply.

Here she commenced sobbing, and exclaiming—"Why did you ever come here? Why did you ever come here?"

"I am very sorry," said I.

Upon which, giving me a languishing glance, she said—"Poor boy! of course we are both dreadfully wicked."

This remark made a seasonable impression on my mind; and having risen from the tombstone, and returned to the house, I endeavoured to consider that an unfortunate episode was ended. I sought once more the honest friendship of Dundas, and

avoided giving Mrs Vish an opportunity of resuming her confidences. Mr Garbold, who had seen, or who knew what had taken place, now commenced, with diabolical pains, to restore harmony between us. With a solemn voice, but laughing countenance, he told me that I had broken Mrs Vish's heart; and though the statement might have been gratifying to my vanity, it caused me some distress; for, judging by the behaviour of Mrs Vish, I thought there was some foundation for it. She showed loss of appetite at her meals, frequently complained of headaches, and used to roll her eyes at me in a most reproachful manner. I believed, however, that she was no longer labouring under any delusion with respect to my sentiments; and a few days before the commencement of my holidays, or vacation, I

went to her, and made her some imprudent and rather disingenuous speeches, with the object that we should be reconciled before we separated. Mrs Vish received these overtures with an unaffected gladness which smote my conscience. She immediately regained her appetite; ceased to complain of headaches; and once more controlled her eyes within the usual bounds of their sockets. When I left Mr Vish's house, Mrs Vish was in tears, and had made me promise to keep up a regular correspondence with her during our cruel separation.

CHAPTER XIII.

I MUST now devote a chapter to the affairs of Helena Sutcliffe, whose fortunes I mean from time to time to follow, for certain weighty reasons hereafter to be disclosed; and I take this opportunity of saying, that as to the apparent mystery of my being able to describe scenes I did not myself witness, and conversations I did not myself hear, the whole difficulty will be duly explained,—at all events hinted,—in the course of this work. When I last spoke of Miss Sutcliffe she was a girl of sixteen, just finishing her education, and with hardly any other cares to disturb her: at

the period of which I am now speaking, she had become a woman, and her peaceful existence of old had been disturbed by some very momentous episodes.

Her father, succumbing to an obscure malady from which he had long suffered, died. In nursing him during his fatal illness, Helena displayed heroic qualities of the first order. While she entirely sacrificed all her own comfort in order to administer to his wants, she nevertheless preserved an appearance of cheerfulness and contentment; nor did she mar this excellent conduct by attempting to make a merit of it. The task of nursing Mr Sutcliffe must indeed have been exceptionally difficult. He was apparently beset by the extraordinary delusion that he was a convict lying under sentence of death. So indeed he was, in a highly

poetical sense; but he chose to imagine that he was a convict in the literal and most prosaic sense; that he was in Newgate, and that he was to suffer by the rope. He frequently asked for "the ordinary." Whereupon, his doctor answered the demand by restoring to him a certain counterpane which had been discarded, and his daughter, with no less futility, offered him a bottle of claret. When he saw the bottle, his wandering thoughts seemed to turn from "the ordinary," and he began eagerly to ask what breakfast he was to be allowed. "What strange breakfasts men in my condition seem to have eaten!" he observed; adding, "I don't have black puddings, or lamb's fry—I have a bottle of claret." He was thereupon proffered some drink which was kept at his bedside, but he pushed it aside, saying, "He refused all sustenance."

In spite of all this eccentricity, however, I believe that the truth was he was under no delusion at all, but that he was merely so foolish, and so blind to the solemnity of the occasion, that he chose to feign in this manner. In fact, he confessed to his daughter a few moments before he expired, that he had been somehow endeavouring to puzzle a certain rather foolish doctor who was in attendance.

But to return to Helena. She had thought herself fully prepared for the sad event, yet when it did take place, her grief seemed at first likely to overwhelm her. During several days she wept for long periods; she was only persuaded with difficulty to eat or drink; and for a time she lost the faculty of enjoying refreshing sleep. Even for five years afterwards she could summon tears to her eyes, by merely think-

ing of her departed father. I mention these particulars because they may seem very curious to the world at large, who forget their dearest relations a few weeks after they have buried them; and I think I have clearly shown, and without any nonsensical similes, that Miss Sutcliffe was sincerely and decently grieved.

She passed the first year after the sad occurrence in strict retirement, refusing to see the numerous visitors who came to offer her their formal condolences. She was obliged, however, occasionally to see her guardian, whose name was Simmons. He, although he performed his duties in the most faithful manner, nevertheless had the misfortune to be an object of great aversion to her. The reason for this was highly extraordinary. Helena had once read in a novel of a guardian who had

ended by marrying his ward; and the consequence was, that when Mr Simmons, in his anxiety to make Helena happy, showed her rather more sympathy than he really felt, she, being very young and very imaginative, imbibed a most extravagant suspicion against him—namely, that he might have the same designs as the guardian of whom she had read. The truth was, that he viewed matrimony with absolute disgust. Thus, through an apprehension rather difficult to be imagined, she repelled the proffered friendship even of her lawful protector.

Wholly ignorant of the fear of which he was the object, he asked Miss Sutcliffe to pass a portion of the year under his own roof, where he promised to provide a suitable protectress for her. Not sorry that his ward energetically declined this pro-

posal, he next urged, with a persistence which was fully justified, that she should, without more delay, choose some kind of a companion. Helena consented to this, and she presently agreed, though not without a little suspicion, to engage a person whom her guardian had recommended for the post.

This lady proved to be a young widow of the name of Gill, whose husband, a purser in the navy, had been recently eaten by sharks in the China sea. Helena received this lady with great kindness, and proceeded to essay by all the means in her power to make of her an actual friend, as well as a companion in name. But just as some people in employing Mrs Gill would have treated her with vulgar insolence, lacerating her feelings with covert ridicule, and so forth, so Miss Sutcliffe, on the contrary, had the misfortune to displease her

companion by showing her too much consideration, and by this word I do not mean "condescension" in the disagreeable sense. She was received by Helena with sincere overtures of friendship; but just as some cur, accustomed to be constantly beaten, will bite the hand which designs only to stroke him, so this companion, habituated to ill usage, received with mistrust every disclosure of kindness. It is true, I believe, that the heart of Mrs Gill, when she was a girl, had been chilled and steeled with excessive doses of geography and ancient history by her parents; and afterwards, as nearly as possible, broken by the purser, previous to his being devoured alive. After a few months of the new experiment, Helena was glad to accede to the companion's request for leave of absence, "to visit friends in the North;" and to make

this matter short, a friend in the North made the unamiable Mrs Gill his wife, and I hope taught her a little sensibility.

Helena Sutcliffe was then once more left alone. While she was undecided as to what step she should next take, her year of mourning having come to an end, she received a visit from a friendly old widow of the name of Chobham. Many years ago Mrs Chobham had cherished a passing tenderness for Mr Sutcliffe, or for his worldly goods, and consequently Helena had always been to her an object of some interest and curiosity. But, furthermore, Mrs Chobham had a son, who at this time was of a suitable age and position in life to think of marrying and settling down; and as he had just been jilted by a young lady in Italy, his mother hoped that he might console himself with a young lady

in England, or, in other words, that he might marry Miss Sutcliffe. Actuated, therefore, either by affection for her departed old friend, or by prudent intentions for the welfare of her son, Mrs Chobham, as I have said, visited Helena, and, as I have not said, carried her home as her guest for some days.

And now a great event took place, which perhaps I should do well to introduce with several pages of essay. I will, however, content myself by making two commonplace remarks: firstly, that human affairs are very uncertain; and secondly, that Mrs Chobham's half-formed project for her son was greatly aided by a mysterious operation of Providence.

On the second night of Helena's visit, as she was dining with the affectionate yet prudent old lady, the disagreeable intelli-

gence was received that Colling Hall was in flames! Before describing the consequences which this calamity had, it will be as well if I shortly state the circumstances under which it occurred. The servants, taking advantage of their mistress's absence from home, passed away their evening thus. The butler and housekeeper each went to visit some friends in the neighbourhood. The footman went to bed "for a good rest," he said, though he narrowly escaped being roasted to death. The upper housemaid, who was suffering from face-ache, went with Miss Sutcliffe's maid to consult the village apothecary. The cook, assisted by the under-housemaid, who also worked in the kitchen, devoted the evening to melting down a large quantity of fat, for some private purposes of her own. She was disturbed in her

oleaginous task by a noise which, she was stated to have said, "baffled description." Thereupon, instead of endeavouring to ascertain the cause or nature of the noise, she suffered imagination to obtain dominion over her; and persuading herself that the end of the world was at hand, hastened to the museum of her late master, with the intention of thence removing the skeleton, and giving it proper interment in the garden. The poor woman would have certainly performed this decent rite, had not she been recalled to her ordinary senses by a loud shriek from the housemaid, who ran in to announce, not only that the house was on fire, but that the footman was burnt alive. As the cook and her colleague, nearly fainting, made their way to the nearest point of egress—namely, the front door—the supposed victim of the flames ran past

them, uninjured, but clad only in a shirt, to give the alarm. This was very necessary, for the shutters being closed, and the devouring element being at work in the innermost part of the house, there was no outward evidence of the fire which was raging within. Presently an antiquated fire-engine came upon the scene; but by that time the flames had burst forth with uncontrollable fury. The principal staircase was in a blaze, and the fierce heat, and dense columns of smoke, rendered highly dangerous any attempt to enter the rooms from the outside. Notwithstanding this, many gallant efforts were made to rescue some of the property. Amidst great enthusiasm, a daring yokel gained a footing in Miss Sutcliffe's bedroom, and soon emerged, to the great joy of all his friends, brandishing something which proved to be a

box of gloves. With the exception of some furniture, certain books, and a few gloomy relics, which included the skeleton, everything of value was destroyed.

When the terrible news was brought to Miss Sutcliffe, she at once stated her intention of visiting the field of disaster, although the distance was fully twelve miles. Mrs Chobham's son, Frank, now petitioned, with a good deal of energy, to be allowed to ride to the spot himself; "For," said he, "I should like to be of any service to you, upon my word."

Helena hesitating, the mother interposed with, "Why should not you both go together?"

Miss Sutcliffe strenuously opposed this proposition, and in her remonstrance was ably seconded by Frank. It was at length decided that he should go alone, and on

his return, report the actual state of affairs.

When he came back from his nocturnal pilgrimage, Helena, overcome with anxiety and fatigue, had just gone to bed, and it was not until she appeared in the breakfast-room next day, that she knew Colling Hall had become a heap of ruins. In the midst of her distress on this occasion, Helena was pleased with Mr Chobham. She was grateful to him for his good-nature in having undertaken a journey of twenty-four miles at night on her behalf; and she was pleased with him for having declined the monstrous proposal that he should drive alone with her. Perhaps, when I have fully described Mr Chobham's character, the reader will credit what I fear was the truth with respect to Mr Chobham's good-nature and delicacy—namely, that it was

his love of adventure and desire to witness the fire that mainly induced him to volunteer his services; and that the object which he sought in declining to accompany Helena, was nothing more than that he wished for the unrestrained enjoyment of his own society. He succeeded both in suiting his own convenience and in gaining Helena's gratitude. But gratitude was unfortunately not the only sentiment her heart soon began to feel towards him. His excessive melancholy, his dejected looks, and his evident abstraction, extorted from her breast some of that quality to which pity is said to be akin. I will not positively say that she loved him, but she felt a great interest in him; and, of course, there is no knowing what may not follow an interest of that kind. Thus, while Frank's sadness was really caused

by his having just been jilted by a beautiful disciple of high art, whom he had met in Rome, the fact was quite unknown to Helena, who, in innocent speculation as to why he should seem unhappy, never suspected the true cause.

At first it seemed probable that Miss Sutcliffe would make a prolonged sojourn at Mrs Chobham's house. But her guardian coming into the neighbourhood, upon business connected with the destruction of Colling Hall, requested her to find a successor to Mrs Gill, and advised her to visit the Continent, in order, he said, that she should find distraction and amusement. These suggestions — by no means unlike those which Mr Simmons might have made had he fancied himself and Mr Frank Chobham to have been rivals—Miss Sutcliffe at once followed. Her new duenna

was a German spinster, whose great bulk, and supposed austerity, were her chief recommendations. Helena travelled with her to Venice, where, being greatly charmed with the place, she remained for some weeks. But fate pursued her.

One evening as she was sitting on her balcony, engaged in embroidery, she chanced to look into the room, where she had left her purse upon the table, and saw the German spinster in the act of stealing a bank-note. After allowing a day to elapse, in the hope of some explanation being offered, Helena charged the companion with the theft, and told her that after she had accompanied her back to England, she must leave her. But Fraulein went away in the night, leaving her young charge to shift for herself.

This proceeding was the more incon-

venient for Miss Sutcliffe, from the fact that she had just parted with her maid, who had gone to nurse an invalid father. Being thus left alone and unprotected, who should come to Miss Sutcliffe in her emergency but Frank Chobham! He immediately proffered the services of a friend in need; and this time he seemed to feel no hesitation on the ground of delicacy. He at once undertook to convey Helena in safety to England, and he performed the duty with perfect fidelity. She, on reaching England, would have temporarily placed herself under the protection of her guardian, of whom, for some reason, she now no longer felt any suspicions. But old Mrs Chobham pressed her to remain with her, "until her plans were settled;" and Mr Simmons, strange to say, warmly seconded the proposal.

So Helena, with no mother or father to advise her rightly, but with a guardian who advised her wrongly—the home she had loved being destroyed — was now nearly at the mercy of old Mrs Chobham and her son; and the success or failure of their designs will be duly shown later on.

CHAPTER XIV.

I ENJOYED only a short recess with my parents. A holiday at this time of year was not a matter of course for the pupils of Mr Vish, and I had been given the option of remaining with him, as Dundas and Pillett were doing, but for obvious reasons I had chosen to go home. I found my father considerably changed. But at this announcement the reader must not prepare to hear of his dissolution. He had evidently been shaken by the death of his old friend Mr Sutcliffe; and he seemed to be, moreover, troubled by some other affairs, known only to himself. Just then, how-

ever, he was helping my mother to entertain a houseful of people, and no doubt these guests diverted his thoughts to some extent. For my own part, I found my home exceedingly dull, and I was much driven into the society of my father's gamekeeper—for our visitors were all persons of fifty and upwards; and to seek out friends of my own age—who all lived at some distance—or to go into the town of Wolvenden, I had nothing to ride but a little stumbling pony, which had been purchased for me when I was much younger and smaller, and of which I was now quite ashamed. Besides my walks with the keeper, therefore, I found hardly anything to fascinate me to my home; and I spoke nothing more than the truth when, in answer to four or five letters from Mrs Vish, I once wrote to her myself, saying that I should not be sorry to return to the north.

Before I did return, a rather noteworthy event took place in our household. White, the footman, came to my father one day, and telling him that he had saved a small sum of money, which to him was a competence, requested permission to leave our service. He was anxious, he said, to make a little home of his own, somewhere in the suburbs of London, if possible near a good library. "And perhaps," he added, with a firm voice but glistening eye, "I may some day find a respectable young woman of my own station of life, and make her my wife."

My father answered in the way which might have been expected from him; that is, he expressed his regret at losing such a valuable servant, and his determination not to oppose to White's plans any selfish objections of his own. He also begged

that White would freely ask his advice if he needed it, either then as to his immediate intentions, or at any future time in any difficulty or distress to which he might find himself exposed. He then shook the hand of his old favourite, and presented him with a complete edition of Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall.' White, in wishing us all farewell, said that he should remember until his dying day the kindness he had received from our family. He then took his departure amidst general regret, my mother extorting from him a parting promise that he would treat with the greatest possible care any reappearance of gout.

When I returned to my tutor in the north, the reception I met with was ominous of further entanglements in store for me. I had determined to meet Mrs Vish in the first instance with particular frank-

ness, and to retain that attitude towards her as long as I remained under her husband's roof. But, with a horrid cunning of her own, she altogether frustrated my good intentions. I arrived in the afternoon, and for some hours neither heard nor saw anything of my tormentor. Mr Garbold, who had returned the day before, asked me, in a low and serious tone of voice, but with a laughing eye, "Whether I had seen her yet?" and, when I had professed not to understand him, inquired "Where the meeting was to take place?" "at what time?" and so on. But the evening meal took place, and still Mrs Vish did not appear. I then went out into the garden, beginning to think, I do not say to hope, that until the next day, at all events, I was secure. But Garbold followed me out into the lawn and told me, as if he

were delivering a very ordinary message, that Mrs Vish wanted to see me in her *boudoir*.

"She hasn't got one," answered I.

But at that moment a window opened just above my head, and Mrs Vish looked out, saying, "Allen!" (she generally addressed me by my surname,) "aren't you coming to say 'how d'ye do?'"

With mingled feelings which I do not care to describe, I obeyed the summons. The room in which I found my tormentor, had been, until very lately, nothing better than a lumber-room, where empty trunks and cases were kept; but it was now fitted up, in a certain school of taste, to serve for what Mrs Vish was pleased to call it —namely, a boudoir.

She had contrived to collect, and hang upon the walls, several pictures; princi-

pally engravings or photographs taken from well-known paintings, and nearly all of them dealing with love or romance. The frames of these pictures were wrapped in muslin, and ornamented with bows of blue ribbon. She had also about her, sundry feathers and fans; two jars which had once contained preserved ginger; a hanging book-shelf, with books, for the most part poems; and several miscellaneous ornaments and works of art. In a conspicuous part of the room stood the phrenological bust, with Combe's book close at hand for ready reference. As for Mrs Vish herself, her own appearance was evidently designed, like that of her boudoir, to intoxicate my simple imagination, and lead me captive. She usually wore dark dresses—she was particularly fond of black silk—and a crinoline of great size; now she

was strangely attired in a scarlet wrapper, long and limp; and the contrast was very striking. She received me with a highly becoming reserve, and made me seat myself in a chair which would have more comfortably held a child of seven years old. She herself reclined on a sofa, and, like an Eastern potentate, commenced the interview by summoning an attendant, and ordering coffee. "Hannah," said she, to the attendant who came, "will you make us two cups of nice strong coffee, please?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Hannah, who then paused.

Her mistress regarded her with a look of compassionate amazement, and asked, "Well?"

"The keys, ma'am, please," answered Hannah.

Mrs Vish, with a stately smile, gave her the keys, and dismissed her.

For half an hour we conversed in a manner which would seem perfectly commonplace, were I to record the conversation here; but which was really rather remarkable, since we were neither of us the least interested in the words we exchanged, but were both thinking of other matters, which, for separate reasons of our own, we did not choose to touch upon. Our interview was brought to an end in a ludicrous though somewhat alarming manner, by the clang of a large dinner-bell, which was rung at this unusual hour for no reason that we could then imagine, unless it might chance that the house was on fire.

When we had hastened down-stairs, however, we found that Hannah had spread

the dining-room table-cloth, and had also covered the table with all the materials for a substantial supper, to which she had sounded a general invitation by ringing the dinner-bell. Mrs Vish, having perceived that the mistake had arisen through Hannah's imperfect acquaintance with the ways of a boudoir, put a good face on the matter; and she, her husband, Mr Garbold, Dundas, Pillett, and I, were soon engaged in an extraordinary feast, to which we all did justice.

But I do not intend to dwell over this portion of my history; and though I have only just chronicled my return to Mr Vish, I must ask the reader to let me pass on now to the time when I was once more leaving my tutor's house in order to go home again. As to what had happened meanwhile, I

need only say that Mrs Vish continued her assaults with an energy, a patience, and an ingenuity, that were worthy of a better cause; and that I, from what combined reasons I need not myself state, resisted all these assaults until the end, when I found a most unexpected ally in Mr Garbold. From certain idle motives which will be partly explained in the course of this work, he had all along given his aid to Mrs Vish, and to the furtherance of her plans; at the last moment, however, he completely changed his attitude, and by so doing, did me a sincere kindness, though he incurred Mrs Vish's resentment, and had a sharp quarrel with her.

The fact is, after plying me with many experiments in phrenology and spirit-rapping, and many lectures on the misfortunes

of ill-assorted marriages, and the delights of free and ennobling friendships, Mrs Vish one day asked me to elope with her. I cannot say that I immediately and peremptorily declined the proposal; on the contrary, I thanked Mrs Vish for her kindness and confidence, and begged only that I might have a little time for reflection. She allowed me twenty-four hours; or rather, I succeeded in avoiding her presence for that length of time. Before she saw me again, I had seen Mr Garbold. He had extorted a confession from me; had apologised for his share in what had passed; and had heard me solemnly declare that, all inclination apart, I had never entertained the intention of disgracing two families, and making one person, at the least, for ever miserable. Mrs

Vish and I had a most painful interview before we parted. She shed a flood of tears, and called me a "cold, mean, cruel, heartless wretch." When I next saw her, it was under very different and far more extraordinary circumstances, as I shall have to disclose in the course of these pages.

CHAPTER XV.

At this period of my life, although still a boy in body and mind, in certain acquired tastes and habits I had become a young man. My parents did not appear to recognise the change until I came home from Mr Vish for the second and last time; but when they did recognise it, they instantly adapted themselves to the transformation, and thus illustrated the fact that parents, and people in general, will adapt themselves to anything, no matter how outrageous, providing that it is in accordance with the prevailing fashion to do so. My father, though he had himself been

birched at the age of eighteen, at once made a show of admitting me to terms of equality with him; and finding that I was too old to play at marbles, at once allowed me to drink port. He also let me argue with him, and, as my opinions were as changeable as my voice, I may have given him some useful practice in debate. My mother, who was naturally ready to spoil me, now began to pay me actual homage. She taught me to contradict, to correct, and to patronise her; she encouraged me in smoking to excess; and sometimes seemed to hint that she suspected me of being a rake. I occasionally felt tempted to gratify my youthful vanity by telling her of my curious affair with Mrs Vish; but my mother seemed to know something approaching the truth as to that matter, for she more than once observed, "You must never go

back to that odious tutor, and his disreputable wife." Her sagacity appeared to me very surprising; but I afterwards discovered that certain letters, which I had intended to destroy, were nowhere to be found; upon which I thought it best to leave matters as they stood, so far as explanation with my mother was concerned.

While my father and mother treated me with unwise indulgence, I, of course, never tried to oppose them by showing them any of that deference and humility which they seemed to consider obsolete; and if they had knelt before me every night for my blessing, before going to bed, I should have given it to them. At the same time, I was perfectly ready to be disciplined; and should have taken a box on the ears from either of them quite as a matter of course.

It positively pained me to see my father, on the point of saying, "Don't do that," or "Don't fidget," change his intention, and cough or smile instead.

In this unsatisfactory state of affairs, my uncle—who in the course of my career has more than once come to my rescue at the critical moment—came to Hare Place, and soon effected a few necessary reforms. He first of all remonstrated with my father for not providing me with occupations and amusements suited to my time of life; and he especially begged him to preserve his game more strictly than he had hitherto done, in order that I might have the advantage of enjoying some good shooting. He also made a critical inspection of our stable, which he found tenanted only by a pair of fat carriage-horses and my pony. He caused the pony to be sold in bondage to

the children of the vicar, and having done this, persuaded my father to purchase me a strong and serviceable colt, which had just been trained for a hunter. I was soon able to laugh as much as any one else at my former experience in company with Dundas; for I took to fox-hunting with the greatest enthusiasm and enjoyment.

I was delighted to find that disparity in age in the hunting-field was no more a disadvantage than disparity in rank. Everybody seemed cheerful and well-mannered; though I certainly noticed that the most timid horsemen were more polite than any one else. As soon as I had become a fox-hunter, I began to feel my position in society no longer anomalous; also I lost much of that mingled bashfulness and assurance which had hitherto made others uncomfortable as well as myself. Indeed, my

own experience has been that fox-hunters, although they may "blurt and swing their legs about" in a drawing-room—as they are said to do—are, if such a thing be possible, rather more agreeable and at their ease than anti-fox-hunting authors and critics. Old gentlemen, who had formerly regarded me with curious dislike, now used to pay me considerable attention; and I found it much pleasanter to have to answer "Whether I had had a good run?" or "Whether I was going to S—— on Tuesday?" than to be perpetually explaining "How I had left Eton?" or "What I was doing with myself?"

But the great question of my future profession was not yet happily decided, and I began to urge my father to give his formal consent to my entering the light cavalry, a scheme which had somehow taken com-

plete possession of me, and to allow me to proceed to an army "crammer" at once, in order to be ready for examination as soon as I should have reached the qualifying age. He told me that he could see no advantage in my returning to Mr Vish, and that if I was bent on entering the army, he supposed I had better be prepared in the usual manner. "As to cavalry," said he, "you know the infantry is the backbone of our army." But I told him that I had set my heart upon being mounted, and he made little further opposition. One day, however, I was surprised to hear that he had asked for a commission for me in the county militia. He explained to me that he had done this in the hope that a little militia service would at once give me an introduction into military life, and reconcile me to afterwards entering the line. I

did not discuss the wisdom of this arrangement, but I may say that I was highly pleased to be no longer in terror of several more years of Latin and Greek.

The "crammer" to whom I was now sent, was a man of the name of Skelton, who lived in a dilapidated mansion in the suburbs of London. He was a rough but highly educated man; and though he was obliged chiefly to teach mathematics, his peculiar faculty was the cultivation of languages, of which he was more or less acquainted with thirteen. He resembled Mr Vish in one respect, for he taught by *formula* quite as much as that gentleman did, and his method met with great success. He "turned out" his pupils ready for examination, as a machine might turn out buttons ready for use. He seemed to me to possess none of the ordinary human

emotions; and at the time I went to him, he was occupying his leisure with the study of Welsh. He made no pretence of guarding our morals, or of encouraging us in polite manners. All he did was to teach each of us how to gain, at a certain date, a certain number of marks. His pupils—either because they found none of the refinements of home in Mr Skelton's house, or because they were naturally addicted to low tastes—passed away much of their spare time in a neighbouring tavern. To me the charms of drinking beer out of a pewter pot, and smoking a meerschaum pipe until I was nearly prostrate, soon began to fade. I must confess, in short, that I had very little of that taste for low company which certain writers, from a rather transparent motive, delight in extolling.

In company with a youth named Patter-

son, I endeavoured under some difficulties to lead a life of elegance and fashion. We used to saunter in the Park, or attend other fashionable resorts; and when a sale was taking place at Tattersall's, we generally contrived to attend it. But Patterson was not content with going to Tattersall's and no more. Emboldened by finding that our presence there did not seem to be resented, or to occasion any stir, with extraordinary hardihood and folly Patterson began himself to bid for some of the horses. At first I believed he was serious, and for two days I respected him as a potential owner of horses; but when I discovered that he had neither money with which to buy horses, nor any purpose to which he could put them if they were bought, I remonstrated with him, though in vain. Nevertheless, his impudence was certainly amusing. He

was very wary, and only threw in an offer when the bidding was quite brisk. On an evil day, and in an unlucky moment, however, by a mere nod of the head he found himself the owner of a chestnut gelding, called Banquo. In this dreadful strait I manfully stood Patterson's friend, and while he was positively shedding tears, ascertained that he was not required either to pay for Banquo or to immediately remove him. So we went to Mr Skelton; and he, by way of practice, recorded the circumstances of the case in Ogham (which he happened to be studying just then), and then gave Patterson a draft — fortunately made out in English—to enable him to pay for his experience. Patterson's father, a very obscure physician, next appeared on the scene; and having reprimanded his son, resold Banquo for a third of the sum he had lately cost.

Soon after this adventure I left Mr Skelton, in order to perform twenty-eight days' training with the militia regiment to which I had meantime been gazetted.

But I must now once more leave my personal history, and give a glance at the fortunes of Helena Sutcliffe.

CHAPTER XVI.

When I last spoke of Miss Sutcliffe, I described her as being at the mercy of old Mrs Chobham, with whom she had been persuaded to remain "until her plans were settled." Now her plans were settled; for she had become the wife of Mrs Chobham's son. I must confess that in attempting to account for the bestowal of such extraordinary honour upon so unworthy an object, I find my own judgment somewhat obscured by passion. I have heard, however, that after Mr Chobham had escorted Helena to England, a rumour was freely circulated that they were engaged to be married. Mr

Simmons, the guardian, heard the report with considerable satisfaction; and, though he presently learnt that it was false, took council with Mrs Chobham, and then came to the conclusion that the match, whether actually contemplated or not, was highly desirable. As for Mr Frank Chobham, he was bent upon succeeding in the plan which his mother had first suggested to him, when his heart was still lacerated by the cruelty of Miss Bertha Dean, the lady by whom he had just been rejected.

Accordingly, he began systematically to lay aside the pursuit of his own immediate comfort, and to devote himself steadily to Miss Sutcliffe. How his courtship prospered, the result explains. He was handsome and highly accomplished; a dutiful son, and, to all appearance, an honourable, well-bred man. He was without a rival,

and several advantages of time and place were on his side. Miss Sutcliffe was young, and what is called "impressionable;" she was alone in the world, and almost unprotected; she felt all the disadvantages of her friendless condition, they were constantly pointed out to her, — the happy alternative being at the same time either hinted or openly suggested. She had no confidential friends of her own age; for, besides having herself been, all her life, exclusive beyond her years, her father had always monopolised her youthful confidence and companionship. Thus many circumstances were favourable to the success of the conspiracy directed against her; and when the emergency came, neither her good sense nor her heart proved strong enough, and she succumbed.

For some time after being first married,

she and her husband lived together in a state of very tolerable happiness. But a gloom was destined to fall over them, at a very early stage in their connubial journey. Mr Chobham was one day brought home from hunting, very seriously injured. His life was soon pronounced out of danger; but his legs were paralysed, and it was said that this affliction would be permanent. For him this was a sufficiently heavy calamity. At the age of thirty, and at the outset of his married life, he was apparently doomed to pass the remainder of his days in an arm-chair! To a student, or bookworm, the misfortune would have been very severe; to a man accustomed to pass most of his time either in travel or in the pursuit of sport, it was doubly so. But how did the blow fall upon his wife, and how was she fitted to bear it? She had

married in haste, and she was now to repent at leisure.

For the first few weeks she realised neither the unhappiness that was in store for her, nor the complete happiness that she had persuaded herself to expect. Still, her first experience was rather favourable than otherwise. Her husband was kind and attentive to her. She found great delight in her daily occupations and daily amusements; she discovered much new pleasure in being able to tell some one else all that passed in her mind; above all, she derived complete satisfaction in knowing whom to oblige and assist, and in what quarter to direct her efforts to do good. When Mr Chobham, the first stage of his devotion having a little subsided, began to occasionally leave his wife alone (by which I do not mean that he neglected

her), Helena was at no loss to pass her time in a very agreeable manner. Her existence at that time might be properly described as a dream, from which she would ultimately awaken to the enjoyment either of happiness or of misery. This "awakening" was not of the kind generally called "rude," for it came by very slow degrees. Helena, only twenty years old, habituated to comfort and luxury, and wholly unaccustomed to restriction, on finding herself suddenly condemned to be the nurse, rather than the wife, of her partner for life, accepted the affliction without any repining whatever. She saw in it the enforcement of a severe but just lesson; that perfect happiness is within the reach of no human being, and that the two great blessings which she herself enjoyed—those of health and wealth—are powerless against

some of the most ordinary misfortunes of life.

The first task which she had to learn was how to bear with Mr Chobham's excessive selfishness. For selfish he had always been, and doubly selfish he not unnaturally became after his accident. The principal duty which he now allotted to his wife was that of reading aloud to him. Neither his eyes nor his brain was injured, and he could have well read to himself; but he derived more pleasure from listening, and it sometimes appeared that he meant to listen for ever. Voyages and travels best pleased him; and he allowed Helena to read, with scant intervals, for whole days. She performed her task with a dutiful bravery that did her the greatest honour. And although the Egyptian discoveries of Dr Mensong, or the Highland Rambles of

Captain Damper, did not comprise matters of personal interest to her, she knew that these works pleased her husband, and that in reading them until her eyes swam, and her throat was parched, she was doing what was right. But I must not be carried away by sentiment; and it may be that the swimming eyes and the parched throat were good discipline for one who had hitherto led a very easy life. Before long, however, other hardships fell to her lot, some of which duty did not really compel her to accept.

Mrs Chobham the elder, at the first news of her son's accident, hastened to his side; and without any apology to her daughter-in-law, proceeded to place herself at the head of the household establishment. Her principal reason for doing this was the anxious solicitude she felt for her son; but

it was also natural that she should feel tempted to display a little authority on returning to a house which, until quite lately, had belonged to her; especially as she had been living in some discomfort since the marriage of her son. She failed to overcome the difficulty of contenting herself with the position of guest, therefore, and her usurpation at first seemed almost warranted; for not only was she an experienced matron, but she had more knowledge than Helena possessed on many local matters. Under such circumstances as these, a model mother-in-law would have left the executive to the mistress of the house, making herself useful at the same time by tendering her advice whenever it was required. Helena would have been very grateful for such help as this; but she found herself, on the contrary, treated in

her own house as a nonentity. The solitary office that she was still permitted to fill (and the usurper seemed to regard it as a sinecure), was that of reader to her husband. All such duties as cutting up his meat, wheeling about his chair, or pouring out his medicine, were performed by his mother; and Helena was pained to observe that he seemed to approve of these arrangements. The fact was, that both he and his mother possessed the same family failing—viz., an absolutely exclusive delight in themselves, and love for their own habits, vices, and latent virtues; and Helena being a Chobham only by marriage, both the husband and his mother had received her into the family with toleration, rather than with cordiality.

One day Helena was reading aloud from the Rev. Mr Don's 'Holiday in the Alps,'

when the time came for Mr Chobham to drink a dose of medicine. She having reminded him of this fact, he said, "Just tell *the mother*, will you?" But Helena this time chose to serve him herself, and he raised no objection. Just as he had raised the glass to his lips, "the mother" came in, and at once ran forward with that kind of brisk alarm which a nurse would exhibit on finding the baby playing with a razor. The old dame soon discovered that the dose had been accurately administered; and, either because she was ashamed, or because she saw the advantages of a division of labour, she allowed Helena, for some time afterwards, herself to give Mr Chobham his medicine. But a most unfortunate accident took place soon after this concession had been made.

Besides certain drugs being administered

to the sick man, a liniment was daily rubbed into his legs. From this latter process he derived so much relief, that he caused Helena to rub him during a great portion of a certain night. At ten o'clock the following day, she had to read to him for an hour and a half, from an abstruse book of voyages; and on the expiration of this task, he asked her for his medicine. He then noticed—apparently for the first time—her sunken eyes and general appearance of exhaustion; and, with uncommon good-nature, himself offered to pour out the drug, allotting to her the less difficult task of holding the glass. This solitary act of self-devotion nearly cost him his life. Instead of pouring out medicine for the stomach, he filled himself a dose of his favourite liniment, which he instantly drank. He had no sooner done so, than

both he and his wife discovered the mistake.

Helena being unusually weak owing to the want of proper rest, was for a moment quite confounded; but quickly recovering her presence of mind, she hastened from the room, to return carrying a pot of mustard and some warm water. This preparation she at once administered to her husband.

Mrs Chobham the elder, who had been quietly discussing some sausages and chocolate in the breakfast-room, hearing an unwonted stir, hurried to the scene of action, and there found what certainly seemed an alarming state of things. Her son, pale as death, was leaning forward in his chair, giving full scope to the operation of the mustard and water; while Helena, once more overcome by fatigue and alarm,

was faintly exclaiming, "Oh, I've killed him!"

In due course, however, Mr Chobham recovered from the effects of the poison, and explained to his mother how all had happened. His mother was constrained to appear satisfied, but she was by no means easy in her mind. And Helena, with some appearance of reason, reverted to the single post of reader.

Soon after this accident, another more startling event took place. Mr Chobham being one day left alone with his wife for a few minutes, she ventured to smooth his brow, and ask him whether he did not feel much better.

He replied that he did, and furthermore, that he had a desire to smoke. She, delighted to find him so improved (for he had not touched tobacco since he had been hurt),

hastened off in order to fetch him some cigars. When she returned his chair was empty, and the room unoccupied!

Helena turned pale with alarm, but not so pale as Mrs Chobham the elder, who now came in, and with trembling lips asked, "Where is he?"

Helena could only repeat the question, but bestirred herself at once to search for him. As she ran from the room, the mother was seized with a fit of hysterics, and commenced to scream, "What have you done with my son? I demand of you, where is he?"

Helena having summoned all the servants she could find, they began to look in every direction for the missing man; and he was presently found, somewhat bruised, at the foot of a short flight of stairs.

As soon as he was able to speak, he

explained the phenomenon which had occasioned so much consternation. When Helena had left him he had dropped his pocket-handkerchief: then, in his efforts to recover it, he had occasion to place one foot upon the ground; when, to his joy and amazement, he discovered that he had regained the use of one leg. He had thereupon risen, and found that he could stand on both legs without any difficulty. An unaccountable whim had then seized him, and this was, to walk into the room where he believed his mother to be, and astonish her with that proof of his powers. But he had hardly started on this expedition, when, the strength of his legs having subsided, he tumbled down some stairs just outside his chamber-door, to be afterwards found and rescued as I have related.

This event, although it caused consider-

able annoyance to the doctors who were attending Mr Chobham, gave great joy to nearly every one else concerned in his recovery. He improved from day to day, and in a few more weeks was completely restored to health. He then proceeded to travel, accompanied by Helena; to whom his mother, with many pangs, once more resigned the reins of domestic government.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN I first joined the militia I was a mere boy, and I possessed no kind of knowledge as to what sort of duties I should have to perform. Indeed I was so young that I had been granted a commission only as a special favour to my father; who in consequence of the Reform agitation, had lately changed his politics. The composition of the militia force was a mystery to me. One of my cousins, young Longstaffe, belonged to my regiment; but owing to a great dissimilarity between his character and tastes and mine, I had seen very little of him since the time when I had tried

to cane him in my "school," and I had never heard from him any particulars about the service to which he belonged. I knew two other officers in the regiment; but one was a major who had been a lieutenant in the navy, and the other was a lieutenant who had been a captain in the army, and this mixture of several ranks only added to my confusion.

The regiment was assembled for training at the town of Wolvenden, not many miles from my home. I took up my quarters at a hotel called The Bull, where our mess was held, and where most of the other officers were staying: for the men were in billets, excepting the permanent staff and bandsmen, who lived in some old red-brick barracks where the regimental business was transacted.

On first entering "the ante-room," as it

was called, at The Bull, instead of finding a number of old gentlemen in white trousers and cross-belts seated at a table (which was positively what I had fancied I might see), the first persons I noticed were four or five particularly young men, three of whom had, like myself, only just joined. There was also present an officer of about fifty years of age, whom, from his weather-beaten hairy visage, ringing brass spurs, and the badges on his uniform collar, I assumed to be the colonel; and whose own remarks did not lead me to suppose that I was mistaken, for he talked only of war and discipline. We were presently joined by Captain Brain, the adjutant, who saluted him of the brass spurs with extravagant ceremony, though the compliment was acknowledged with great gravity. Captain Brain, who was also in uniform, wore the ribbon of a

medal which he had earned some years previous to my birth. He had a loud, hoarse voice; was short, stout, and bald-headed; and he carried his elbows almost to the height of his shoulders. I presently perceived by the conversation, that the officer whom I had imagined to be my colonel, was really the surgeon, Dr Ascough.

I was listening with great respect to the opinions he was expressing as to the probability of our being shortly sent into huts in a neighbouring camp, when I was amazed to hear him interrupted in his remarks by one of the captains who had meanwhile come in, who said laughingly, "Oh, shut up, Coffy! you're an old pill-box, and don't know anything about it."

Ascough did not appear to relish this, though he tried to seem as merry as possible; and I could not help wondering

why all his badges of rank should procure him nothing better than familiarity. A young officer on joining, generally called him "Doctor" for a few days; then "Ascough;" and finally, towards the end of a month, "Coffy."

I began to dress for my first mess-dinner at least an hour sooner than was necessary; and while thus engaged was told that a certain Sergeant Munden wished to speak to me. I said I would see him, and soon afterwards he presented himself. He was a tall handsome man, with venerable-looking white hair. His face was as sun-burnt as that of a gipsy. He wore four medals, and as he drew himself up and saluted me, I felt very proud of having him under my command. He opened his business thus: "I have come to ask your honour if you will allow me to clean your sword and

accoutrements for you. You will want some one to do the job for you, and I know how your things should be better than any other person in the regiment. I have served in the army for thirty-two years; I was all through the Crimea and the Mutiny, and there isn't any man in the service better known or more respected than myself. The colonel knows me well, and so does the adjutant."

I thanked him, and gave him my sword, with some reluctance, however, for so far from wishing to see it made cleaner, I was already mortified by its extreme brightness, which seemed to proclaim its having seen no kind of service.

Sergeant Munden, having taken the sword, went on to say that he supposed I had given my washing to some one already.

I told him that I had not yet done so.

"Then will you allow my wife to wash for your honour?" said he—adding, "she does all the washing for the young officers. They won't employ any other person. 'Sergeant,' says one of the young gentlemen, Mr Percival, 'I won't allow any one to meddle with my things, only Mrs Munden. She's the cleanest, most respectable, most hard-working woman in barracks.'"

When he had finished this speech I readily agreed to his second request, for I had not the same scruples with regard to my shirts as I had respecting my sword.

He now produced a curious-looking book, and said in a low tone, "I have taken the liberty of bringing you the order-book, sir. The corporal that had the orders wasn't fit for a young gentleman like you to speak to. I won't say he was drunk, for then I should

have made him a prisoner; but he was three parts gone. Nearly the whole regiment's the same way just the first few days."

The latter remark was perfectly true, and the adjutant sometimes found it necessary to pitch tents in the barrack-yard for the extra accommodation of the numerous prisoners. When I had read the orders without being much the wiser, Sergeant Munden seemed about to take his departure, but his keen eye suddenly lit upon a portrait which I had hung up, of my uncle Thomas in full uniform.

"Was your father in the service, your honour?" asked Munden.

"No; that's my uncle," answered I.

"If it's not taking a very great liberty, what was his name?" proceeded the sergeant.

"Colonel Allen," I replied.

Upon this Munden laid down his cane

gloves, order-book, and my sword, and appeared overcome by pleasant recollection. "Colonel Allen!" cried he, "Colonel Allen! —he commanded the 53d."

"No; he was in the Guards," said I.

"He was in the Guards, was Colonel Allen," continued Munden, quite unabashed; "but the 53d lay alongside them at Dublin. Oh, Colonel Allen! I knew him well: I was his orderly many a time. He was a fine officer, sir, and a wonderfully strict man at the same time."

At this point we were interrupted by the entrance of young Longstaffe, who had come in pursuance of a promise to see that I was correctly dressed before going to dinner. On seeing him, Sergeant Munden at once took his departure.

I was grateful to my cousin on this occasion, though he was not celebrated for his

good-nature, for he showed me that I had put on the wrong kind of trousers, and the wrong sort of neck-tie and collar. While I was making the necessary alterations, he gave me a cursory account of Sergeant Munden. He was, beyond doubt, he said, a rascal in the main. He lived in comparative comfort, while his wife and family were in distress, and he had "no conscience whatever." On the other hand, he was not without some good qualities; for he knew his drill very well, had been distinguished for bravery, could undemonstratively carry more liquor than any two ordinary men—"and would always tell a good lie, and stick to it, to get an officer out of a scrape."

As soon as I was attired in my scarlet and silver lace, I experienced an amount of sincere complacency which no arguments or demonstrations could have disturbed. In-

stead of feeling a reasonable pride in belonging to the constitutional force of the kingdom, I felt a spirit of hostile exultation, as if Wolvenden had been a foreign town and our regiment part of an army of occupation. When our bandsmen, in their white tunics, marched under the archway of the hotel, followed by a large crowd, I nearly danced with joy; and when I went into dinner, the music playing "The Roast Beef of Old England," I gave vent to my emotion by saying to my cousin, "How jolly this is! isn't it?"

He, however, had served for one month in the previous year, and was fast growing out of the *enthusiastic age,* so he answered, "Oh, you'll be sick of it soon enough!"

The dinner to which I sat down was in reality a banquet of the first order; for as in time of peace we were put to expense in

this matter for only twenty-eight days, we chose to live for that period as well as judges in assize time. I was surprised to find, during my first mess-dinner, that very few oaths were uttered; that women, horses, and wine were not the absorbing topics; and that no wagers were laid: but I presently reflected that we very likely did not enjoy all the supposed privileges of the regular army. At dinner I was frequently asked for the pleasure of a glass of wine, which gave me great satisfaction; and I was also pleased to drink the health of my sovereign, as soon as the cloth was removed.

After mess I was presented to my captain, who was Sir James Hoddem. I had for some time regarded him with extraordinary veneration, on account of his being described in the 'Army List' as a "late cornet" in the Life Guards. I had no

means of knowing that he had only served for about six months in the army, or that, owing to ill health, he had never been through the riding-school. On making my acquaintance, Sir James told me that I was very fortunate to have been posted to "number ten," which was the company he commanded.

I asked him, in a friendly and confidential manner, which I believed to be appropriate, "whether we had much to do?"

"*You'll* have plenty to do, you may take your oath," he replied.

I found that what he had said was very true; and for several days I was very closely engaged in learning the necessary rudiments of the art of war. However, I was soon allowed to make some progress, and I had the distinction of carrying the colours on parade.

In the next chapter I shall relate a few of my professional experiences, and I believe that some of the revelations I shall have to make will be found not only curious, but startling.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In due course it came to my turn to be the "subaltern of the day." I commenced my duties with keen enjoyment, and at half-past six in the morning stood in a shed, enthusiastically watching the issue of the rations. These rations consisted of one pound of good bread and three-quarters of a pound of inferior meat. The quartermaster was not present, as he should have been; but the quartermaster-sergeant, who was there, seemed thoroughly to understand the business in which he was engaged, and indeed he seemed on perfectly familiar terms with the butcher.

"There's too much bone on this," observed one of the men.

"Nothing of the sort," answered the quartermaster-sergeant; "there's not more than half of it fat and bone."

"It's how I like it myself," remarked the butcher, with a smile.

I often felt inclined to espouse the cause of the men who complained; but besides being timid of exercising my authority, I knew nothing about the quality of bread or raw meat. Also, some men complained without reasonable cause, and simply as a speculation; and furthermore, the quartermaster-sergeant had one argument which seemed plausible, to meet any concessions on my part, and that was, "If you do it for one, they'll all expect the same."

When the general issue of rations was concluded, the quartermaster-sergeant's son,

a fat little boy of seven, arrived, carrying a large basket, in which the butcher and baker placed rations of meat and bread.

"Would you like a piece of suet?" inquired the butcher.

"Well, I don't mind if I do have a pudding to-day," answered the quartermaster-sergeant.

"It's beautiful meat," soliloquised the butcher; and the quartermaster-sergeant said, "That's all, sir," and went away.

I was now alone with the two purveyors, and was about to depart, when a small knot of militiamen, headed by a corporal, returned to the shed. The corporal, having introduced the deputation, told me that the men wished to speak to me.

"What is it?" I asked.

"We think," answered one of the deputation, "that it's very hard we've got to

take this here ration." Saying this, he amazed me by exhibiting an enormous empty marrow-bone.

Notwithstanding my inexperience, I could see that a trick was being played, and was about to say so, when the butcher, with a sulky air, gave the complainants an excellent beef-steak, with which they made off laughing.

I afterwards ascertained that the marrow-bone which I had seen had been produced upon some former occasions; and I believe that it was periodically waved, as it were, before the butcher in a warning manner, to remind him that certain practices of his were observed.

After the issue of rations I performed various duties to the best of my ability, learning what I had to do from a report which had been written by a former sub-

altern of the day. This report concluded with the statement, "Nothing unusual occurred during my tour of duty;" but as something very unusual did occur during the tour which I performed, I think it is worth while that I should relate what it was, though I shall not fatigue the reader by describing *seriatim* everything else that I did.

The "subaltern of the day" was supposed to act in an auxiliary capacity with the "captain of the day." The captain with whom I chanced to be on duty was an officer of the name of Solomon. He had obtained his commission from the Lord Lieutenant in a rather mysterious manner; and all that we knew about him was that his father had been a parliamentary agent. Captain Solomon (and so he invariably styled himself) was the bane of our colonel's

life, and an object of detestation throughout the regiment. While he was not out for training he seemed to traverse the face of Europe, leaving ridiculous traces of himself wherever he went. If we chanced to read of "an English officer" quarrelling at a ball in Vienna, or being thrown from his horse at a review in Paris, we were sure to hear afterwards that it was Solomon. He also used to write to the newspapers, suggesting that we should wear epaulets, or pockets, or spectacles, or that we should rank as regular soldiers. When he was out for his annual training, some means were generally found of keeping him in order. Yet even then, as he lived in lodgings in a remote part of the town, and never dined at mess when he could avoid it, he sometimes contrived to bring the uniform which he professed to love into

discredit. He was constantly embroiling himself with the regular soldiers, of whom there were a few in the town; and one of them had to be tried by court-martial for a dispute that he and Solomon had in the street one night. It was with this troublesome person, then, that I had to perform my first tour of duty as subaltern of the day. During the day he did not exhibit any of his peculiarities, except in once rebuking me for not calling him "sir." When night came, having dined at mess, I first went the rounds myself, and then, in accordance with custom, asked Captain Solomon at what hour it would suit him to visit the guard. He replied, "About half-past eleven, subaltern."

Accordingly when that hour had arrived, Solomon girded on his sword, and we sallied forth in order to go to the

barracks. We had not gone far along the streets, when we noticed a large crowd assembled round a public-house which was one of our billets. The crowd was watching the antics of a tipsy militiaman, who, fully dressed, armed, and equipped, and carrying his musket with fixed bayonet, was walking up and down the pavement in the manner of a sentry. He frequently waved his right hand to the applauding mob, and kept shouting, "On guard! on guard!"

As soon as Solomon saw all this, he paused, and clapping his hand to his chin, seemed to deliberate. Then, pushing his way through the crowd, he marched up to the disturber, and shouted, "What are you doing out of your billet, sir?"

To which the man only answered, "On guard! on guard!"

Upon this, Captain Solomon turned to me, and said, "Subaltern, fetch an escort." At the same time he drew his sword, intending, I suppose, to kill his prisoner, should he attempt to escape.

I was very glad to be able to get away from this scene, which I found embarrassing, though I did not know that it was disgraceful. I hurried off to the barracks, and what happened to Solomon in my absence, I heard partly from him, as I shall presently show, and partly from other sources, which I need not mention.

The prisoner, soon after Solomon had drawn his sword, took to his heels, and, accoutred as he was, ran down the street. Captain Solomon immediately darted in pursuit, but he was so unfortunate as to get his empty scabbard between his legs, and measure his length on the pavement.

Nothing daunted, however, he quickly rose to his feet, and, followed by a delighted mob, continued the chase.

To return for the present to myself. I quickly reached the guard-room, where I interrupted Sergeant Munden, who was on guard, in an outrageously coarse story which he was relating over a pipe to a little drummer-boy, who might have been his grandson. Sergeant Munden, who smelt very strongly of rum, on hearing what was the matter, at once despatched the picket, which had just come in, to Solomon's assistance. Having been ordered to "fetch" an escort, I was about to accompany the picket into the town, when Munden, shaking his head in a very serious manner, said, "Don't you go, sir; stay here till they come back."

Resenting his advice, yet secretly anxious

to act upon it, I stood for a moment irresolute, and Munden continued, "You are very young, sir, and I don't wish you to get yourself into trouble. If Captain Solomon likes to get into trouble, it isn't anybody else's business. Why, by golly!" (here he gave a laugh,) "when I was in the Mauritius——"

"Sergeant Munden!" said I, astonished at the change in his manner. He struck his heels together, saluted, and walked back into the guard-room.

I remained in the barrack-yard for about twenty minutes, when the picket returned with their prisoner. They were causing him to perform "the frog's march"—that is, he was being carried by the ankles and wrists, the front of his body being towards the ground. The procession was closed by Captain Solomon, who now came up to

Sergeant Munden, and said in a loud excited voice: "Sergeant! I give you charge of this man; you had better handcuff him: if he kicks at the door, take his boots off. I shall hold you responsible if he escapes."

"If he tries to escape, sir," answered Sergeant Munden, giving a wink to the drummer-boy, "I shall put him to death."

Solomon next inspected the guard, visited two drunken prisoners, and then went off to his lodgings in the town, whither, at his urgent request, I accompanied him. As soon as we were within doors, he produced a bottle of champagne, and at once drank the greater portion of its contents. He then began to exhibit embarrassment, and at length said, "Youngster; will you do me a favour?"

"What is it?" I asked.

"Why, not to go talking to the fellows about what we've been up to, to-night," said he.

I had to consent, but I did so with reluctance, for I had been amusing myself by thinking that the night's adventures would make an excellent story for me to tell to the other subalterns, and to Dr Ascough, who always loved gossip. I told Solomon, however, that if the colonel asked for my evidence at the orderly-room the next morning, I should be obliged to speak. At this his jaw fell for a moment; he then said, "Of course, certainly; but I have seen to all that; the corporal of the picket will be the only evidence. Don't you see," he continued, "I don't want my name introduced, if I can help it, for I might get the poor devil I confined penal servitude."

Being excessively curious to hear some

particulars of the chase, and especially the final capture, I now begged the captain to tell me all that had happened. Rendered communicative by the wine he had drunk, he narrated, with mingled glee and remorse, his recent adventure—first making me renew my promise of secrecy. Omitting the circumstance of his having fallen on his face, he told me that when the prisoner broke away he pursued him through many streets, for altogether a distance of nearly two miles, and at last lost sight of him in the vicinity of a small beer-shop near the barracks. Solomon had then entered the beer-shop, and found the fugitive in the act of concealing himself under a bench in the tap-room, still fully armed.

"I called upon him to surrender," said Solomon; "but he never moved. So I took the beggar by the leg, and was just pulling

him out when the picket came up, and I handed him over to them."

Before I left Captain Solomon that night, he offered to give me some private instruction in military law. "For," said he, "I am a pretty old soldier, and know all the ins and outs of the thing."

Having excused myself from accepting his offer, I took my departure. As I walked back to my quarters, I thought over what I had seen and heard that night, and came to the conclusion that a man who was born a gentleman might, without any acquaintance with military law, make a better officer than a man who knew all the laws in the service, but did not possess the spirit in which they were meant to be exercised.

CHAPTER XIX.

ALTHOUGH, as I have said, I had not of late had any intimacy with young Longstaffe, my cousin, during my month's training I was a good deal thrown into his society; for his widow mother, Lady Susan, had a place called Pie-pond Hall, close to Wolvenden, and now began frequently to invite me there. Lady Susan Longstaffe, besides being my mother's first cousin, was my godmother; and though she had not taken much notice of me since my infancy, and had certainly never ascertained that I had been confirmed, still, as soon as I was quartered at Wolvenden, and in the same

regiment as her son, she became most affectionately civil to me. This was her method with every one. She cared nothing for friends or relations as long as they were absent, and simply neglected them altogether; but directly she was brought back into collision with them, she behaved as if she had always been their tried friend; and, as she had charming manners, and a voice and eyes which might have belonged to an angel, she nearly always contrived to heal any wounds which her neglect had inflicted. As for me, I had not missed her face during the last sixteen years any more than she had missed mine; but I was pleased to be now feasted and almost caressed at her house, because it afforded me an opportunity of seeing a person for whom I had an honest and very sincere affection—namely, Mrs Frank Chobham, who at this time

came to stay at Pie-pond Hall with her husband.

I have not thought it necessary to record the progress of two or three dreamy attachments with which I had already indulged myself in the course of my short career. I had now and then cherished a special admiration for some one of the opposite sex, who in each case was a few years my senior; but these affairs had never been so serious as to occasion me any but the most transient unhappiness or other inconvenience. For Helena, however, I had for a long time felt a different kind of regard, which had its foundation in respect; and though I must own that I witnessed the ceremony of her marriage with hardly any emotion whatever, that event had not ended, or even interrupted, my admiration and liking for her. When I met her at Pie-pond Hall, it

was the first time I had seen her since the occasion of her wedding. I had heard that Mr Chobham had not proved quite as devoted as he had undertaken to be; but I cannot say that I perceived any "settled gloom," "mute appeal," or "shocking alteration," in Helena's face; and though I might have felt flattered had she confided to me that she was unhappy (as Mrs Vish would have done in her place), she on the contrary gave me to understand that she and "Frank" were a wonderfully happy couple.

My frequent visits to Pie-pond Hall excited the envy of some of the other subalterns, to whom Lady Susan had shown no civility, and to whom her son was an object of dislike. They decided that I gave myself airs of superiority, which was not an absolutely unjust charge; and under these

circumstances they greatly enjoyed a ludicrous mortification which befell me, as follows. I was one day sitting in the anteroom answering an invitation from Lady Susan, when a visitor was announced. He entered the room, and immediately addressed me by name; whereupon I recognised that Philip Graham, whom I had hitherto seen in the dress of a Blue-coat boy. Although he no longer wore that strange but picturesque costume, he was dressed in a very extravagant manner; also the black hair on his head was cut so short that his ears stood out like handles; and his face was completely shaved, a blue mark indicating that he naturally had a stiff beard. But if his eccentric appearance was unprepossessing, his voice was still more so. After giving a most exaggerated start of pleasure upon seeing me, he ad-

dressed me in tones which might have come from the throat of a bull. "Allen!" he bellowed, "do you not know me?"

Seeing every one turn round with amazement, I was really tempted to adopt the base expedient of pretending not to know him. Before I could recover from my bewilderment, he continued, in the same stentorian accents, "Why, how you have improved! Indeed I had some difficulty in recognising you."

I received this with rather a bad grace; but, as an alternative to sinking through the floor, I offered him some refreshment. Upon which he simultaneously frowned, rolled his eyes, smiled nearly from ear to ear, and answered from the pit of his stomach, "Oh, thank you!"

While we were waiting for some wine to be brought in, he asked me whether Mrs

Frank Chobham was quite well. On my informing him, partly from perversity, that I believed she had a slight cold, he suddenly elevated his eyebrows half-way up his forehead, and, changing his bull-like roar into a squeak, said, "I am so sorry."

The wine being now brought in, in a common decanter belonging to the hotel, he resumed his deep voice, and shouted, "What very nice glass this is!"

This ridiculous remark increased my ill-humour, though I could not help smiling; and as the best mode of getting out of the ante-room, where every one was struggling to restrain laughing, I proposed to Philip that we should go for a walk, to which he consented, and I hurried him from the room. Although I was a good deal annoyed, I was at the same time full of curiosity to know why he dressed and

spoke in such an unusual manner. This he soon explained, by telling me that his father having disowned him, he had become a strolling player, or, as he styled it, "a comedian."

He told me that his father—that is, Ralph—wanted him to go into the wine-trade, to which he would not consent; that at last, having spent nearly all his money, he had gone to an agent in Bow Street, who gave him his "first shop of walking gentleman and general utility, at fifteen bob a-week, in the provinces. But I've got on very well indeed since then," said he; "I do the leading business now, and our old woman finds me in my dresses."

Having said all this in a tone which caused several passers-by to turn and look back at us with surprise, Philip Graham at length explained that his object in coming

to see me was to ask me whether I would procure for him the patronage of the colonel and officers of the regiment, and also the assistance of our band, for a "grand military performance," which he and his companions desired to give before leaving Wolvenden. I told him that for my own part I hoped to see him act, but that he should apply to the colonel as to the other matters which he had mentioned. Then, as we had reached the door of the theatre, which he said he must enter, I was about to wish him good-day, but he suddenly seized me by the arm, and asked, "Do you see that lady over the way there?"

I could only see a woe-begone-looking woman, who was leaving a pastry-cook's shop, but I answered him in the affirmative; upon which, modifying his accustomed bellow into a stage-whisper, he said, "She

can *vamp* against any woman you ever met!"

"Can she!" said I, wondering what he meant; and declining his invitation that I should come in, I took leave of him, and returned to the hotel. Here I found the ante-room very full, and, amongst others, my captain, Sir James Hoddem, was there. He was drinking as I came in, and, on perceiving me, shouted, "What very nice glass this is!" at which every one laughed. I tried to laugh too, but I believe only appeared uncomfortable. Sir James, after eyeing me for some time in a critical manner, said abruptly, "Did you go round all our billets at the dinner-hour to-day? Oh! 'most of them,' eh? Well, supposing you visit them all now." With a heavy heart I proceeded to obey the order.

The presence of Philip Graham in Wol-

venden caused me the keenest mortification. At any moment he might appear in our mess, when I should have to choose between insulting him by sending him away, or insulting my brother officers by entertaining him. Dread at first paralysed my action, and for a whole day I took no measures of precaution. The result was that on the second day, as I was preparing to go to parade after breakfast, I heard the sonorous voice of the actor saying, "But, tell me, has he gone to drill? You do not know? But surely you can ascertain!"

My brow was covered with a cold mist, and I should positively have leapt from the window, had there been no danger of breaking my legs in doing so. The sonorous voice grew more distant, however, and I escaped safely to parade. As I was afterwards performing my various duties in the

field, I meditated as to what I had better do with respect to Graham; and I decided to lay the case before one of the majors, the ex-naval officer, whom I knew to be clever at devising expedients.

When our manœuvres came to a close, we were formed up on the common where they had taken place, and then began to march back to barracks. As I was happily pursuing my way, the band playing "Old Bob Ridley," the men of my company gave a unanimous groan of derision. Such expressions of feeling were by no means unusual, but, having assisted to restore silence, I followed the glances of the men, in hopes of seeing something to amuse me, when an object which filled me with anger and despair met my eye. Mr Graham had just emerged from a side street, and was intently watching us as we passed. He was dressed

in cinnamon-coloured trousers, and a velveteen coat, while on his head he wore what was called a pork-pie cap. He had fastened a pair of double eye-glasses to his nose, and I believe it was this circumstance that prevented him from seeing me as I passed. One of the militiamen who noticed Philip declared that he must be "Bob Ridley," while another said that he was a Russian.

As soon as we had been dismissed I told all my fears to the major, and the consequence was that when Graham came to The Bull, soon afterwards, he was ushered into a private room, where the adjutant saw him, promised him what he required, and then sent him away. The chief part of the annoyance being thus removed, I was vexed by Dr Ascough's taking me aside, later in the day, to remonstrate with me for having ever received poor Philip in the ante-room.

"Why, what else could I have done, Ascough?" said I.

"Done!" exclaimed he; "Done! Why, my dear boy, you should have told him to go to the devil, to be sure!"

But I presently learnt, somewhat to my consolation, that I was not the only person to whom Graham had been the cause of embarrassment. Soon after he and his companions had given their "grand military" entertainment, and had quitted the town, I dined at Pie-pond Hall, where I again met Helena Chobham and her husband. In the course of the evening our hostess, Lady Susan, said, "I must tell you we had a visit from a most romantic, charming young man, a friend of Mrs Chobham's, the other day.

Helena smiled at this, and said, "Oh yes, but Mr Allen knows him too."

As I endeavoured to utter the name of "Graham"—for I had guessed who it was —my countenance betrayed so much emotion that every one burst out laughing. I then compared my own recent experience with that of Mrs Chobham, and found that we had each suffered very similar annoyance; for she too, wishing to be amiable, had received Graham when he called upon her, and had been reprimanded for having done so. In fact, I believe that her husband, in reproving her, said almost word for word what Dr Ascough had said to me. Helena and I extracted much amusement out of the Graham incident, but we agreed in wondering how it came to pass that a man of Mr Ralph Graham's supposed fortune should suffer his only son to be wandering about the country in search of subsistence.

After this meeting with Helena Chobham (of whom I shall have a good deal more to say not long hence), I returned to The Bull at Wolvenden, there to take part in a kind of entertainment so little heard of in the present day that I think it is worth describing. I found the ante-room almost untenanted. One rubber of whist was being played. Yet the air was impregnated with the smoke of many cigars, and there were other signs which denoted that the room had only very recently been deserted. The four whist-players were the colonel, an army officer, another guest, and Sir James Hoddem. The latter, as the cards were being dealt, nodded to me, saying, "Well, how's Pie-pond getting on?" He then added, in a lower tone, "Go and see what those youngsters are doing, and let me know."

I left the room, and soon a sound of distant strife led me in the direction of a corridor in a remote part of the house. Here I found everything in darkness, but from one particular room a violent clamour proceeded. Into this room I quickly entered, and was immediately brought to the ground by a blow in the ribs. Jumping up again, I at once took part in a fray in which I could not at first distinguish friend from foe. From the voices I heard, and from the forms which I gradually discerned, however, it appeared that Solomon and three or four subalterns, including myself, were engaged in a battle with several men, of whom one was the ostler. Two chairs had been broken up, and the pieces were being used as staves, though most of the party used their fists. For my own part, I gave one opponent some pretty hard blows in the

face, and he retreated, pretending not to see me. As I was following him, I accidentally trod on the upturned features of Captain Solomon, who lay roaring "Murder!" with the ostler sitting on him, and shaking him by the throat. I should have gone to the rescue, had I not been saved the trouble by the ostler's wife, a woman of great size, who ran in at this moment. She, having quickly identified her husband in the darkness, seized him by his whiskers and began to drag him away, at the same time screaming, "You wretch! why don't you come to bed? Fighting at this hour of the night, and with the gentlemen staying in the hotel too!"

At this point Solomon, who was still on the floor, seized the ostler by the leg and endeavoured to throw him, upon which the Amazon of a wife caught up a slop-pail

which stood by and flung the contents in Solomon's face. She and her husband then effected a retreat, and the landlord appearing with a light, the rest of the enemy also made off.

I now learnt how the disturbance had arisen. Solomon, having drunk too much wine, had attempted to enter a room where a sort of club was being held. After some disputing with the members, he had gone away from the door; but when one of the members, who was staying in the house, had gone to his bedroom, Solomon had followed him, and some of the other members had followed Solomon, who in due course was rather roughly handled. A few of the subalterns, however, having heard what was going on, had gone to his rescue. The ostler, who was in the same condition as Solomon (except that he had been drinking

beer and gin, instead of champagne and port), had been attracted to the scene merely by his desire to fight with somebody.

Having assisted in putting Solomon to bed, for he was unable to go home, I returned to the ante-room, but found all in darkness.

The next day, when I awoke, Captain Brain the adjutant was standing at my bedside. He told me that he had come to demand my sword, and to place me in arrest. He knew nothing, he said, "as to what I had been about;" but he was simply carrying out the colonel's orders, which he had received at eight o'clock that morning. He then left me to my reflections, which were of a most uncomfortable kind. My most disagreeable thought was that I was a military prisoner in a hotel. This was far more galling to my pride than if I had been a prisoner in barracks or camp. "What," I

asked myself, "would the waiters and chambermaids suppose? Perhaps that I was accused of felony!" But I was soon engaged in further unpleasant reflections of a rather more serious and solid nature. When my breakfast, or prison fare, was brought up to my room, my letters which had come by the post were also given to me. One of them, undated and unsigned, ran as follows:—

"SIR,—You are a dirty, stuck-up, young blackguard, and I will tell you why. Your silly, purse-proud old parents never tied the knot. You won't believe this, at first, but *ask them for yourself*, and you will find that it is *correct*. But cheer up, Tommy. The vanity of high birth is the greatest of all vanities and fopperies, and the kings of Denmark draw their pedi-

gree from Ulfo, who was the son of *a bear*. —FAREWELL."

Full of indignation at this extraordinary insult, I nevertheless broke into a cold perspiration of fear. I was debating what course to take, when I heard a trumpet-sound outside, and looking out of the window, I saw the army officer who had been playing whist the night before, ride under the archway of the hotel, at the head of a troop of cavalry.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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